EXAMINING THE UNPUBLICISED ADVERSE EFFECTS & DISTRESSING EXPERIENCES REPORTED FROM THE PRACTICE OF SUDARSHAN KRIYA YOGA

Your symptoms are just a sign of purification, you are being cleansed
Don't read any negative experiences of 'sudarshan kriya' it's bad karma
Your doubts are just because of low prana, do more 'bhastrika pranayama'
Ignore all negative reviews, spend more time volunteering & take more courses

THE SILENCED REVIEWS OF SUDARSHAN KRIYA YOGA

Real voices. Unfiltered reviews. Udisclosed Risks. Untold Side Effects.
A digital collection of curated comments compiled from various online experiences, with insights on fast & forceful breathing exercises by

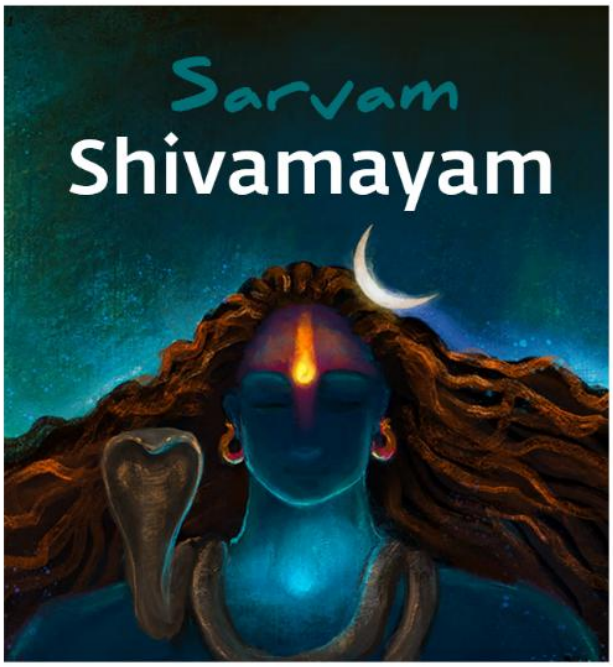
Former Sudarshan Kriya Yoga Teachers – Klim & Skywalker
Transcendental Meditation Founder & Teacher Maharishi Mahesh Yogi
Shakti Tantra Acharya Agyatdarshan Anand Nath (Master AD)
Retd. Merchant Navy Capt. Ajit Vadakayil
Famous Astrologer Abhigya Ananad
Yoga Teacher Parth Choksi
YouTubers Joji Chacko (Techie Archie), R Chandrasekhar (Lucy Malayalam) &
Several Other Anonymous Course Participants & Former Teachers of

THE ART OF LIVING FOUNDATION

THE SILENCED REVIEWS OF SUDARSHAN KRIYA YOGA

FIRST EDITION - AUGUST 2025
SECOND EDITION - NOVEMBER 2025
Copyright © [2025] Sarvam Shivamayam

THIS WORK IS LICENSED UNDER A **CREATIVE COMMONS ATTRIBUTION-NON-COMMERCIAL-SHAREALIKE 4.0 INTERNATIONAL LICENSE (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0)**. YOU ARE FREE TO COPY, SHARE, AND REDISTRIBUTE THIS MATERIAL IN ANY MEDIUM OR FORMAT, AND TO REMIX, TRANSFORM, AND BUILD UPON IT, PROVIDED THAT: YOU GIVE APPROPRIATE CREDIT TO THE AUTHOR(S) OR PUBLISHER(S), YOU DO NOT USE IT FOR COMMERCIAL PURPOSES, ANY ADAPTATIONS ARE SHARED UNDER THE SAME LICENSE AND YOU DO NOT USE IT TO DEFAME, DISPARAGE OR NEGATIVELY CRITICISE ANYBODY WITH CYNICISM



Sarvam Shivamayam
Community-Published Digital Edition
ISBN: Not applicable (free distribution)
First Edition: 08/2025

All efforts have been made to ensure accuracy. The author(s) / compiler(s) accept no liability for how this material is used or interpreted or responded to. All information is entirely based on or derived out of information available freely in the public domain. **The design of the book's cover seeks to visually capture the sense of dismissal that many individuals experience when voicing critical concerns or sharing distressing experiences and adverse effects after practicing Sudarshan Kriya Yoga. It reflects the uncritical and often dismissive responses such individuals frequently encounter from teachers, volunteers, and course instructors associated with THE ART OF LIVING FOUNDATION.** Such reactions marked by irrational denial or unwillingness to acknowledge differing perspectives can hinder meaningful dialogue and prevent the recognition of potential issues. This is especially concerning given that sudarshan kriya yoga includes powerful breathing techniques such as Kumbhak pranayama, Bhastrika pranayama and rapid cyclic breathing. These practices, while beneficial for some, are known to carry health risks, particularly for individuals with certain medical conditions for which these techniques involving fast or forceful breathing are strongly contraindicated. Ignoring or invalidating reports of adverse experiences does little to address the root of the problem and may perpetuate harm through denial and silence.

“This book is in dedication to the silent sufferers-the innumerable souls across the world who, in search of peace, found themselves unsettled by the very breathing exercises they were told would set them free.

To those who practiced with trust, only to be met by tremors of the mind, by waves of anxiety, disorientation, despair-or the racing heart, the dizzy spells, the surge in blood pressure, the fluttering breath, the trembling limbs, the near-fainting collapse of a body and mind that was overwhelmed-this book is for you.

It is for those whose experiences were unheard, or dismissed, and whose pain was wrapped in misplaced spiritual jargons, whose symptoms were called “purification” when they were, in truth, cries for help.

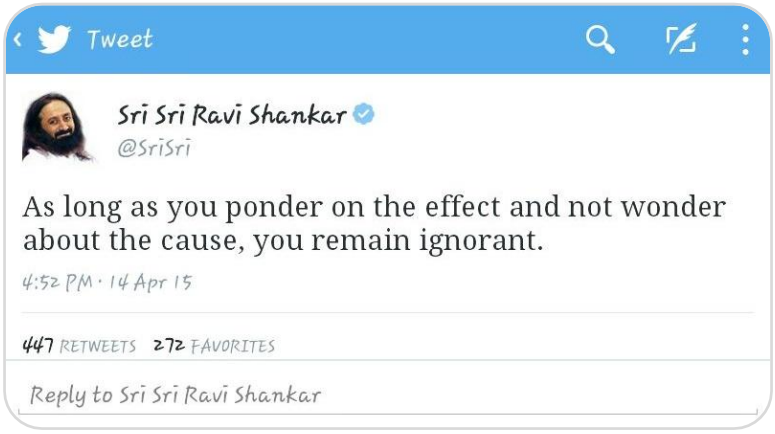
To those who walked in search of light, but found themselves wrestling with shadows-not for lack of devotion, but because even the path of breath control and manipulation can lead through darkness

May your truth be honoured.

May your healing begin with becoming aware and being heard.”

THE SILENCED REVIEWS OF SUDARSHAN KRIYA YOGA

Shedding light on unpublicised experiences, unfiltered reviews, undisclosed risks, and untold side effects linked to the practice of Sudarshan Kriya Yoga (SKY) in the hope to bring awareness among practitioners and educate people about its cause and effects


Tweet
Sri Sri Ravi Shankar
@SriSri
As long as you ponder on the effect and not wonder about the cause, you remain ignorant.
4:52 PM · 14 Apr 15
447 RETWEETS 272 FAVORITES
Reply to Sri Sri Ravi Shankar

PREFACE

It is said that “Removal of Ignorance Is What True Knowledge Is”..and that is also the very inspiration behind the creation of this book. This book is, to simply educate readers about the potential health risks and possible adverse effects of Sudarshan Kriya Yoga, and is written not out of opposition, but out of responsibility- to help people understand the possible risks involved & practice their sadhana in a safe way to achieve true wellbeing, and not just imagined progress

This book has arisen out of a profound need to bring clarity and precise guidance to a path that is often misunderstood. Its purpose is simple, to illuminate the unseen, to shed light on the potential consequences of practices like Sudarshan Kriya Yoga, especially when taken on by individuals whose body or mind may not be suited for it, or who carry hidden health risks under which such practices must be avoided or done in a different way under supervision, or those who have not been examined for such risks but have been taught to practice the Sudarshan Kriya Yoga, indiscriminately or with ignorance.

The intention is not to instil doubt or fear, but to ensure that as you walk your spiritual path, you do so with both faith as well as informed awareness, and not live in the shadows of unquestioning beliefs or misunderstood assumptions about pranayama & kriya. The book is not to rebel, but to remind, to bring awareness. It is not about criticizing the practice, but about reminding you that there are subtleties within the science of yoga, pranayama, and kriya that, when misunderstood or misapplied, can lead to unintended consequences. It presents instances seen across the world, where the practitioners, although well-meaning, were not sufficiently trained to detect the early signs of distress, to understand the deeper complexities of human health, or to make timely adjustments in the practices to ensure the well-being of those they guide. This book simply serves to bring that awareness to the forefront, so that we can move forward with wisdom, caution, and responsibility.

Sudarshan Kriya Yoga (SKY), as popularized by **THE ART OF LIVING FOUNDATION**, is practiced by thousands and purportedly millions worldwide and widely praised for its potential psychological and physiological benefits. However, alongside its acclaim, a growing body of independent research, clinical case reports, and hundreds of firsthand accounts reveal that this advanced yogic breathing exercise is not universally safe or suitable for all individuals. For some, particularly those with underlying or emerging mental health conditions, cardiovascular concerns, or history of trauma, the practice may trigger significant adverse effects. Documented adverse outcomes have included the worsening of Complex PTSD symptoms, triggering or intensification of panic attacks, irregularities in cardiovascular function such as palpitations or elevated blood pressure, and a range of psychological disturbances including

heightened anxiety, dissociation, and emotional dysregulation. In some cases, more extreme effects including cardiovascular events have also been reported, as described in detail in later sections of this book. Notably, Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, founder of **THE ART OF LIVING FOUNDATION**, has at times acknowledged in his *satsangs* that ***Sudarshan Kriya is not suitable for everyone***. Because of the intensity of the breathing techniques involved, he has emphasized that in order to benefit it is required for one practicing it to have a certain level of mental and physical health. Despite this, such health-related disclaimers are rarely if ever communicated openly in the organization's course advertisements, public promotions, websites, introductory talks, corporate presentations, in-course sessions, interviews, and podcasts or marketing campaigns. The lack of transparency in how SKY is presented to the general public raises important ethical concerns, especially given the widespread fallacious assumption that practices like pranayama & kriya are inherently harmless.

The information presented in this book is not meant as baseless criticism, but as a constructive critique intended to encourage reflection, learning, and openness. This book is not intended to condemn, attack, defame or discredit **THE ART OF LIVING FOUNDATION,** the breathing exercise practice of Sudarshan Kriya Yoga, or its revered founder Sri Sri Ravi Shankar. It is not a cynical commentary and neither an attempt to insult and mock out of hatred or enmity, nor an act of defiance against spiritual teachings or traditions. Rather, it is a sincere, fact-based effort to give voice to a group of individuals whose real-life experiences from practicing SKY breathing exercise deserve to be acknowledged, understood, and learned from. The individuals whose experiences are shared in this book are not outsiders or critics of spirituality. They were:

- Enrolled in **THE ART OF LIVING** Happiness Program/Part 1/YES+ course in good faith,
- Trained by certified instructors, themselves guided or approved by Sri Sri Ravi Shankar,
- People who approached the practice with sincerity and hope, often seeking relief from pain, stress, disease or life's deeper questions.

Many of them trusted the promises made-that Sudarshan Kriya would lead to joy, clarity, healing, and transformation. But for these individuals, what was meant to be a path to happiness became a source of unexpected hardship. Their health, stability, and peace of mind were affected-sometimes temporarily, sometimes severely, and in a few tragic cases, irreversibly. Despite this sincere beginning, many of them encountered unintended and distressing outcomes-ranging from physical symptoms to psychological disturbances. These were not the benefits they were promised, but consequences they were unprepared for. For some, the cost of pursuing happiness turned out to be the very things they hoped to restore: health, peace, and stability. They paid the true cost of 'happiness' not in money, but through lived suffering-

suffering that could have been prevented with proper health screening, transparent communication of the risks and adverse effects of Sudarshan Kriya Yoga, clear instructions to inform participants of these risks, and responsive support for those who experienced distressing symptoms.

WISDOM ON LISTENING TO & ACCEPTING CRITICISM

When people criticize, you should listen to them.
If there is something good in it, take it and
if there is nothing good then just leave it, ignore it.
They can comment, so what! You should not lose your equanimity.

Where there is a problem, it must be pointed out, but without any hatred in your heart, otherwise the feeling will harm only you.

Praise may not be true, and sometimes criticism may be (true), but we still long for praise. Accept criticism as joyfully as praise.

Sri Sri Ravi Shankar

GLOBAL HUMANITARIAN AND WORLD SPIRITUAL LEADER, FOUNDER
THE ART OF LIVING FOUNDATION

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This book lauds the courage of the brave few who spoke when silence was safer: *astrologer Abhigya Anand, Acharya Agyaatdarshan Anandnath, science communicator Alleson Reyna, YouTubers Chandrasekhar R. and Joji Chacko, yoga researchers and former Sudarshan Kriya teachers Dr. Richard Brown and Dr. Patricia L. Gerbarg, yoga teacher Parth Choksi, retired merchant navy captain Ajit Vadakayil, and fashion designer Vishal Gaba* -your voices carved open a path through complexity and controversy. You carried fire into the fog, often at great cost. This book remembers.

Gratitude to the former teachers and volunteers of **THE ART OF LIVING FOUNDATION**- those who found the courage to walk away and the integrity to speak out. Through the blogs *Leaving the Art of Living*, *Beyond the Art of Living*, *Further Beyond the Art of Living*, and *Guruphiliac*, you held up a mirror for others to see themselves and perhaps to reclaim their own truth. This book acknowledges your vulnerability and strength with profound respect.

To the founder of **THE ART OF LIVING FOUNDATION**- *Sri Sri Ravi Shankar,* this book also offers deep gratitude and respect. From your vision and teachings, the practice of Sudarshan Kriya emerged- a gift that has touched millions and inspired countless people across the world to breathe with awareness, serve humanity, accelerate the experience and bliss of meditation, and live with compassion. The movement you created has brought solace, community, and spiritual upliftment to innumerable seekers.

Yet, as with every powerful tradition, light and shadow coexist. The very openness and universality that allowed Sudarshan Kriya to reach so many have also revealed areas where greater care, communication, and sensitivity are needed. This book arises not from opposition to that light, but from devotion to its completeness -for truth, too, is a form of reverence.

May these reflections serve not as criticism but as a constructive critique or rather, a contribution: a call for dialogue, refinement, and inclusiveness within a living tradition that continues to evolve. In honouring the courage of those who spoke of their suffering, we equally honour the source of the practice itself and the noble intent with which it was first shared.

THE ART OF LIVING FOUNDATION remains a beacon of humanitarian service. This work only hopes to strengthen that legacy by ensuring that every seeker's experience, whether joyful or challenging, finds acknowledgment, compassion, and understanding within the same family.

This book holds deep respect for Sri Sri Ravi Shankar's intent to serve humanity and his wisdom in sharing spiritual knowledge across the world. At the same time, it examines numerous accounts and testimonials

of unintended consequences, sporadically shared online but often suppressed or overlooked, that could have served as valuable cautionary examples for others. In this context, it may help to remember something very simple and human: Sri Sri Ravi Shankar-though widely loved as a spiritual guide and humanitarian-is still a human being. And like all human beings, even the most sincere teachers carry moments of limitation, incomplete understanding, or unintentional oversight. Seeing him through this compassionate lens does not diminish him; it makes space for the reality that no teacher, however elevated, is beyond the boundaries of human nature.

With this gentle understanding, one can hold the possibility that certain aspects of how safety guidelines, cautions, or follow-up instructions were shaped around Sudarshan Kriya Yoga may have reflected those natural human limitations. This is especially meaningful to acknowledge because Sudarshan Kriya is a powerful and transformative breathwork practice-one that can influence physical rhythms, emotional states, neurochemical balance, and subtle inner experiences. In such a sensitive area, even a small oversight can have noticeable effects for certain individuals.

Recognizing this is not an accusation. It is simply an act of kindness toward everyone involved-toward the teacher, toward the students, and toward the truth. Even the most compassionate teachers may not fully see how every participant responds internally, especially in a large and growing spiritual movement. What they intend as helpful may, for a few, need more nuance, more safety, or more personalized guidance. This does not reduce the good they have done. It simply acknowledges that the human side of any path leaves room for learning and refinement.

Seen in this gentle light, the evolution of safety measures, clearer contraindications, or individual support within Sudarshan Kriya does not imply wrongdoing. It reflects the natural growth of any spiritual or healing tradition as it touches more lives and encounters more diverse experiences. Such reflections can exist alongside deep respect for Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, appreciation for the many who have benefited, and a sincere commitment to supporting greater safety, clarity, and care for everyone who chooses to practice.

Holding this balanced view allows both honesty and compassion to coexist. It allows love for the teacher and responsibility toward seekers to stand together peacefully, without conflict. And it brings comfort in knowing that truth, spoken gently, can itself be an act of kindness and devotion.

It also serves as a quiet reckoning for the voices stilled, and inconvenient truths suppressed within organizations; for the teachers, volunteers, secretaries, and officials who knew but did not speak of the cases of adverse effects associated with the practice of Sudarshan Kriya Yoga; for the inner reports never made known to the outer world.

To Jody of *Guruphiliac*, for his role in bringing visibility to personal accounts shared by former teachers, volunteers, and members who reported experiencing distress or psychological difficulty within spiritual settings. This book acknowledges your commitment to openness and your unconventional yet steady honesty. Through the *Guruphiliac* platform, individuals who once felt unheard have found language for their experiences, recognition for their struggles, and space to reflect, learn, and heal. May your continued dedication to transparency inspire greater awareness, thoughtful discernment, and responsible engagement within spiritual communities and the wider public.

And finally, this book acknowledges the often-unseen contributions of former teachers, long-time followers, and volunteers of **THE ART OF LIVING FOUNDATION**-especially those writing under the names KLIM, Skywalker, Obi-Wan, The Doctor, Dayalau, and the r/Ex_Artofliving community. Through blogs, forums, and anonymous platforms such as Reddit, they have shared their personal experiences, reflections, and concerns with honesty and thoughtful reasoning. Their willingness to articulate difficult or complex experiences has provided space for open dialogue, supported others in recognizing their own feelings, and encouraged a climate where questions can be safely explored. To each of you: your voices have shaped these pages. Your contributions are valued. You are not alone, and you know who you are.

A SINCERE REQUEST

To the beloved, kind and empathetic members of a one world family,

Global humanitarian and spiritual leader Sri Sri Ravi Shankar often encourages everyone to embrace the ancient Indian saying, **"Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam"** which means **"the world is one family of humanity belonging to each other and belonging to the Divine"** . It's a call to recognize our shared humanity, promote compassion, and extend care and understanding to all beings. In that same spirit, this family with all its kind and considerate members are urged to also embrace those brothers, sisters and children of this family who have reported experiencing the pain of suffering from adverse reactions and side effects, or exacerbated health challenges after they began with and continued with the practice of Sudarshan Kriya Yoga.

Their stories matter too.

A true family makes room not only for joy, but also for understanding-especially for those who have suffered in silence, were unaware of the potential health risks, or precautions and technique adjustments for practicing Sudarshan Kriya, or those who were perhaps not screened properly & effectively by their course teachers during course registration, or those who found themselves confused or unsupported when encountering and experiencing unpleasant symptoms of adverse effects, and whose experiences may have been dismissed for not aligning with the mass marketed & dominant narrative of transformative positive benefits that Sudarshan Kriya is popularly advertised to bring.

These experiences are not accusations.

They are a vital part of the broader truth. The same Divine who dwells in the hearts of the joyful and awakened also dwells in the hearts of those who suffer. That same light lives in you, in the authors of this book, in Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, and in those whose voices are shared here with courage and vulnerability. The Divine that resides within the master, the teacher, also resides within the seeker-within the one who smiles, and also within the one who suffers silently, and whose voice is too often dismissed or discounted by popular opinion. It is in the light of that shared divinity and humanity that this work is humbly offered.

A BRIEF BACKGROUND ABOUT THE ONLINE EXPERIENCES, COMMENTS AND REVIEWS COMPILED IN THIS BOOK

The following sections of this book include nearly 260 excerpts from online reviews, supplementing the 200 documented cases of adverse effects reported by international science communicators and described in the research and clinical observations of former yoga and pranayama instructors Dr. Richard P. Brown and Dr. Patricia L. Gerbarg both of whom previously taught with **THE ART OF LIVING FOUNDATION**. These pioneering psychiatrists were among the first to formally identify, document, and publicize the adverse effects associated with Sudarshan Kriya Yoga (SKY), while also advocating for personalized adaptations to make the practice safer for vulnerable and at-risk individuals.

After approximately five years of collaboration, however, both researchers chose to end their association with **THE ART OF LIVING FOUNDATION**, as the organization declined to implement the recommended changes to its Sudarshan Kriya program. Despite mounting evidence that certain breathing techniques within SKY were triggering adverse physiological and psychological reactions among a significant number of practitioners, the foundation resisted revising its teaching methods to address these concerns.

In the years that followed, a growing number of independent academicians, science communicators, influencers and expert in yogic science have examined, summarized, or expanded upon Dr. Brown and Dr. Gerbarg's findings through their own observations and messages issued in the interest of public welfare. Through blogs, research papers, and public awareness initiatives, these professionals have sought to deepen understanding of the potential health risks, contraindications, and necessary precautions associated with Sudarshan Kriya Yoga. Their collective efforts have helped foster a wider dialogue on the importance of informed consent, responsible instruction, and practitioner safety in breath-based and meditative practices.

The reviews compiled in this book represent over 260 independently gathered online accounts, entirely distinct from the cases documented by Dr. Brown and Dr. Gerbarg. They do not overlap with any of the research or case studies cited in their publications, nor do they appear in the eight research papers on Sudarshan Kriya that **THE ART OF LIVING FOUNDATION** has chosen not to reference in its promotional or educational materials.

In the absence of a centralized review platform-such as an Amazon marketplace where all user feedback naturally gathers-the experiences of Sudarshan Kriya Yoga (SKY) practitioners are scattered across

countless unconnected spaces: YouTube comments, Reddit threads, Facebook groups, blog discussions, wellness forums, and mental health communities. Each individual account may appear anecdotal on its own. But when hundreds of such reports emerge independently across continents, cultures, and time periods, all describing **strikingly similar symptoms**, these experiences form a coherent pattern that cannot be dismissed as coincidence.

Anecdotal reports, when present in large volume and showing repeated thematic consistency, have long been recognized in medicine as important early indicators of under-studied risks. Many adverse drug reactions, therapeutic side effects, and clinical syndromes were first identified not in laboratories, but in the repeated lived experiences of ordinary people whose voices converged around the same concerns. In the case of SKY, recurring patterns-dizziness, panic attacks, fainting, insomnia, palpitations, derealization, intrusive thoughts, and kundalini-like energetic disturbances-align with known physiological mechanisms of **hyperventilation-induced hypocapnia, reduced cerebral blood flow, autonomic imbalance, and secondary hypoxia**, especially when such breathing is practiced repeatedly or in individuals with hidden vulnerabilities.

A significant reason the testimonies shared in this book must be compiled and examined is the complete absence of risk disclosure in **THE ART OF LIVING'S** marketing materials. Across promotional videos, brochures, course descriptions, public talks, and introductory sessions, Sudarshan Kriya is consistently advertised as:

- universally beneficial
- safe for everyone
- free of adverse effects
- suitable for all ages and health backgrounds
- a technique that "only brings positive outcomes"

Such messaging creates a false sense of assurance. It suggests that SKY is a harmless relaxation exercise, when in reality it is a physiologically powerful breath modulation practice capable of inducing significant shifts in respiratory chemistry and autonomic function. The contrast is stark when compared to basic medical ethics. Even paracetamol, one of the safest and most widely used medicines in the world, is marketed by clearly stating both:

- its intended benefits (fever and pain reduction), and
- its potential adverse effects, however rare (liver strain, allergic reactions, gastrointestinal irritation)

This balance is not optional-it is a global ethical standard.

THE ART OF LIVING does not apply this standard to Sudarshan Kriya. It promotes only the upside while omitting, minimizing, or reframing any potential risks. There is no acknowledgment of:

- contraindications
- the intensity of the practice
- physiological risks associated with hyperventilation
- documented cases of distress
- the possibility of psychological destabilization
- the need for screening or medical guidance

This omission is not merely a marketing choice-it directly contributes to preventable harm. Had risks been transparently communicated, many practitioners who experienced adverse effects would have approached SKY with clear expectations, appropriate caution, or the decision to abstain altogether.

When a spiritual organization promotes a powerful physiological technique as universally safe while suppressing or overlooking reports of harm, external examination becomes not only reasonable but necessary. The hundreds of experiences compiled here-scattered across the internet yet repeating the same adverse reactions with remarkable consistency-collectively serve as an early-warning dataset that demands scientific attention. The intent of this book is not to oppose SKY or diminish the positive outcomes some individuals report. It is to balance the narrative by presenting **the entire spectrum of real experiences**, thereby encouraging:

- scientific inquiry
- transparent education
- informed consent
- ethical instruction
- public health responsibility
- compassion toward those who suffered unintended consequences

Spiritual techniques do not become immune to scrutiny simply because they are framed as ancient, sacred, or transformative. If anything, their power demands greater honesty, not less.

The stories gathered here reveal a clear truth:

when hundreds of individuals independently describe similar distress after the same practice, it is no longer a collection of anecdotes-it is an observable phenomenon requiring serious investigation.

The purpose of collecting these accounts is not to present anecdotes as definitive scientific proof. Rather, it is to highlight a **consistent and statistically meaningful signal** that warrants formal, independent investigation. Ignoring such patterns simply because the technique is spiritual, popular, or organizationally revered would be inconsistent with scientific ethics and public safety.

Furthermore, the organization’s advertisements, introductory workshops, and public talks - whether delivered by its founder Sri Sri Ravi Shankar or its representatives - tend to omit or inadequately communicate the potential risks, contraindications, and necessary precautions essential for safe practice.

IN THE WORDS OF DR BROWN & DR GERBARG –

award winning authors, clinical psychiatrists, yoga researchers & former teachers of

THE ART OF LIVING FOUNDATION

Headlining the 2015 Newtown Yoga Festival on Saturday, August 22, will be two award-winning authors and nationally recognized doctors: Dr Patricia Gerbarg and Dr Richard Brown.

https://www.newtownbee.com/...

"I was very happy with my traditional practice," Dr Gerbarg admitted, but at her husband's urging, began to learn the breathing practice known as sudarshan kriya yoga [SKY]. I was blown away by what I experienced, and what the others experienced," said Dr Gerbarg. She delved into studying and researching what she saw happening with participants, which included a loss of anxieties and worries.

In 2000, Dr Brown furthered his studies in SKY breathing practice, sponsored by the Art of Living Foundation based in Bangalor, India.

"It was a specific six-day program that included yoga movements, yoga philosophy, yoga breathing practices, meditation, and Hindu religious content," Dr Gerbarg said. "The breathing practices included slow, medium, fast, and very fast breathing techniques. We found the faster breathing techniques to cause adverse reactions in some vulnerable people, particularly those with bipolar disorder, anxiety disorders, posttraumatic stress disorders, and seizure disorders. Since we were not able to convince the Art of living Foundation to allow us to adapt the program to the needs of individuals with mental illness, we withdrew from the organization after about five years of study."

A NOTE ABOUT THE AUTHORS, CONTRIBUTORS & DISCLAIMERS

The comments, reviews, experiences, and testimonials reproduced in this document - whether as full copies, excerpts, or screenshots - are credited to their original authors and user accounts as publicly posted on various blogs and online platforms. This book does not have a single author; rather, its true authors are all those individuals who have shared their personal experiences of adverse effects following the practice of Sudarshan Kriya Yoga. All information presented here is either directly sourced from or derived from publicly available material and is published solely for educational purposes and public awareness. Each contributor chose to share their story publicly in their own words, and their accounts have been included in this compilation without any alteration to tone or meaning, in order to preserve authenticity and transparency.

It is important to clarify that the inclusion of these comments does not necessarily imply endorsement by the authors, compilers of this book, or anyone who circulates or shares this book-especially where the language used might appear unparliamentary or be construed as offensive, defamatory, accusatory, cynical or abusive.

In some of the shared excerpts and screenshots of online reviews and comments, certain verbal expressions may reflect emotionally charged opinions arising from deep mental or physical distress, frustration, or trauma. Such expressions are understandably presumed to represent the personal experiences and emotions of individuals who have reported suffering serious adverse effects after practicing Sudarshan Kriya Yoga. These reactions may stem not only from physical or psychological pain but also from feelings of being unheard, misunderstood, dismissed, or met with bias while seeking help or clarity. Readers are kindly urged to approach these testimonials with discernment, empathy, and contextual awareness. Where strong or emotionally expressive language appears, it should be received with natural compassion - much like one would extend to a friend or family member sharing a painful experience - rather than judged or met with defensiveness or dismissing their experiences in favour of one's bias or beliefs. These are not attacks-they are earnest expressions and reviews seeking acknowledgment, safety, accountability, consideration and healing. This book only intends to be a container, an instrument, a medium for bringing light to the truth of the shared experiences which have been either ignored, dismissed or lay scattered on the internet. This book is not meant as a vehicle for blame or hate and in honouring that, it welcomes all voices with respect, responsibility, and integrity.
This is a call not for division, but for wholeness - where truth and compassion meet, and where no one is left behind in silence or shame.

If you or someone you know has been affected by such practices or is seeking support, you are warmly encouraged to read and educate yourself about the health risks and precautions for Sudarshan Kriya Yoga, and ask your teacher from **THE ART OF LIVING FOUNDATION** important and pertinent questions about the practice, its health risks, precautions and verify their answers using knowledge available in authentic texts on Yoga and Pranayama, along with other critical resources for guidance which are mentioned at the end of this book.

CONTENTS

PREFACE 6

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS 10

A SINCERE REQUEST 13

A BRIEF BACKGROUND ABOUT THE ONLINE EXPERIENCES, COMMENTS AND REVIEWS COMPILED IN THIS BOOK 14

A NOTE ABOUT THE AUTHORS, CONTRIBUTORS & DISCLAIMERS 19

CONTENTS 21

Chapter 01 Sudarshan Kriya Yoga -Promise, Complexity, and the Importance of Safety Literacy 24

Chapter 02 The Interplay of Health Risks, Contraindications, and Adverse Effects in Practice of Sudarshan Kriya Yoga 29

Chapter 03 Understanding Reported Adverse Effects 35

- Reported Adverse Effects Domain 1- Sleep Disorder & Visual Health 39
- Reported Adverse Effects Domain 2- Neuro-Physiological Health 44
- Reported Adverse Effects Domain 3- Respiratory & Pulmonary Health 69
- Reported Adverse Effects Domain 4- Cardiovascular Health 72
- Reported Adverse Effects Domain 5- Kundalini Sickness & Carpopedal Spasms 102
- Reported Adverse Effects Domain 6- Fainting or Loss of Consciousness 127
- Reported Adverse Effects Domain 7- Mental Health 134
- Reported Adverse Effect Domain 8– Cognitive Health 165
- Reported Adverse Effects Domain 9- Digestive Health 198
- Reported Adverse Effects Domain 10- Pregnancy & Menstrual Health 201

Chapter 04 Adverse Effects Amplifiers - Conflicting & Inconsistent Guidance with Missing Health Risk Precautions 203

- Questioning Advertisements Promoting Sudarshan Kriya as Safe & Free from Side Effects 240

Chapter 05 Known Health Risks & Precautions for Sudarshan Kriya 244

- Physical Health Risks & Precautions For Sudarshan Kriya Yoga: 244
- Mental Health Risks & Precautions For Sudarshan Kriya Yoga: 245
- Lack of Transparency on Health Disclosure Policy Changes 245
- List of Possible Adverse Effects from Practicing Sudarshan Kriya in Presence of Health Risks 247

Chapter 06 Common Questions about Lack of Transparency on Health Risks & Precautions for Sudarshan Kriya Yoga 252

Chapter 07 Can the Founder of Sudarshan Kriya Yoga Address Adverse Reports Without Bias 253

Chapter 08 Examining the Guidance Provided by Sri Sri Ravi Shankar to a Practitioner Experiencing Potential Adverse Effects of Sudarshan Kriya 258

Chapter 09 Advice on Forceful and Rapid Breathing Techniques by Prominent Yoga & Spiritual Gurus 263

Chapter 10. Sudarshan Kriya Yoga (SKY) vs Kapalbhati and Bhastrika 269

Chapter 11. A Message from Acharya Agyaatdarshan: An Authority in Yogic Sciences 271

- Cautions on Pranayama and Sudarshan Kriya 271

Chapter 12. A Message From the Child Prodigy & Astrologer who Predicted the Covid Pandemic 275

Chapter 13. Merchant Navy Veteran Trained in Respiratory Protocols Questions Safety of Sudarshan Kriya: Warns of Potential Health Risks 277

Chapter 14. Scientific Basis: What You Should Know About Hypocapnia (Low Carbon Dioxide Levels) 280
Chapter 15. Scientific Basis: What You Should Know About Hypoxia (Low Oxygen Levels) 282
Chapter 16. Scientific Basis: What You Should Know About Respiratory Alkalosis 285
Chapter 17. Scientific Basis: What You Should Know About Carpopedal Spasms 287
Chapter 18. Scientifically Plausible Causes of Reported Adverse Reactions and How to Identify Symptoms of Side Effects 289
1. Over-Breathing And Carbon Dioxide Crash (Hypocapnia) 290
2. Strain On The Heart And Circulation 291
3. Breathing Stress And Lung Issues 292
4. Neurological Stress And Migraine Risk 292
5. Digestive, Hormonal, And Reproductive Effects 293
6. Eye And Ear Pressure Problems 294
7. Mental Health And Emotional Instability 294
Chapter 19. Possible Mechanisms that Explain the How Adverse Effects Can Occur 298
Cardiovascular Adverse Effects 298
Scientific Mechanisms Behind Cardiovascular Risk 299
Why Heart Attacks Can Occur from Fast Breathing Exercises 302
Why Strokes Can Occur from Fast Breathing Exercises 302
Respiratory Adverse Effects 303
Neurological Adverse Effects 303
Psychiatric Adverse Effects 304
A. Panic Disorder 304
B. Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD) 304
C. PTSD & Trauma Disorders 304
D. Bipolar Disorder (Hypomania, Mania) 305
E. Psychotic Disorders (Schizophrenia, Schizoaffective) 305
F. Severe Depression, Post Partum Depression & Suicidality 306
G. Trauma-Related Dissociation 306
Autonomic Nervous System Dysregulation 306
Endocrine & Metabolic Effects 307
General Symptoms in Otherwise Healthy Individuals 307
Mechanisms 307
Common Symptoms Experienced by Healthy Individuals 309
Why These Symptoms Matter 310
Chapter 20. Classical Yoga & Ayurvedic Perspectives 312
Clear Warnings From Classical Yoga Knowledge 312
Ayurvedic Knowledge Cautions On Fast Breathing And Dosha Imbalances 312
Chapter 21. Sri Sri Ravi Shankar's Guru Maharishi Mahesh Yogi's Traditional Philosophy of Meditation & Wisdom on Fast or Forceful Breathing Exercises 314

Transcendental Meditation versus Breath-Control Practices 314
The Problem with Effortful Breath Control 315
Sudarshan Kriya was Reportedly Disallowed in TM Organization 315
Maharishi's Wisdom & its Relevance in Today's Wellness Culture 316
Public Warnings vs. Internal Practices 319
Implications for Practitioners 320
Chapter 22. Considerations for Practicing Sudarshan Kriya Yoga during Grief: Why Some Seekers Face Greater Risks 321
Complex Grief and Complex PTSD 321
Grief, Survivor's Guilt, and Suicidality 322
Postpartum Vulnerability: A Physiological High-Risk Window 323
Undiagnosed Bipolar Disorder: A Major, Often Missed Contraindication 324
Undiagnosed Schizophrenia or Schizoaffective Disorder 325
Why Weekly Long Sudarshan Kriya Follow Ups Magnify All These Risks 326
Why This Matters: Ethical and Clinical Responsibility 327
REFERENCES 331
APPENDIX A Safe Practice Guidelines 334
Quick Self-Check Symptoms List 336
APPENDIX B Prioritizing Contraindication Screening 340
Contraindications Checklist 340
Medical And Psychiatric Testing Recommendations 344
Appendix C Critical Information about Sudarshan Kriya Yoga 345
Appendix D Publicly Omitted & Unadvertised Research Studies On Sudarshan Kriya (2005–2018) 346

Chapter 01
Sudarshan Kriya Yoga -Promise, Complexity, and the Importance of Safety Literacy

"Every breath-based practice carries both promise and consequence.
This chapter reflects on how a technique designed for harmony can,
in certain conditions, provoke imbalance. It calls for an evolution in practice
one that honors both the sanctity of breath and the science that safeguards it"

Sudarshan Kriya Yoga (SKY) is, for many, a doorway into deeper self-awareness and transformation. It stands as one of the most widely disseminated breath-based techniques in contemporary yoga, taught across more than 150 countries under the banner of **THE ART OF LIVING FOUNDATION**. Combining rhythmic cycles of slow, medium, and fast breathing, SKY is said to harmonize the body's biochemistry, regulate emotions, and expand consciousness. Over the years, it has been practiced by millions - from students and professionals to clinicians and seekers - each drawn by its greatly advertised promise of clarity, calm, and relief from stress and tension.

The global enthusiasm surrounding Sudarshan Kriya reflects the profound appeal of breathwork itself. Modern science continues to affirm what ancient traditions long understood: that the breath is a bridge between body and mind, physiology and psychology. When guided correctly, it can positively influence heart rate, stress hormones, and mood regulation. Many participants report greater mental balance and emotional resilience after regular practice. Yet, precisely because of this physiological depth, SKY is not a passive or neutral activity. It actively modulates vital systems - the respiratory, cardiovascular, and autonomic nervous systems - creating states of altered physiological and psychological balance. Such intensity, while therapeutic for some, may pose challenges for others whose health profiles are less stable or whose systems are more sensitive or prone to possible health risks. The same technique that relieves tension in one person may amplify distress in another.

Beyond the Idea of Universality

Across cultures, breath-centered practices are often perceived as universally beneficial - tools that can only help, never harm. This assumption has fuelled the rapid popularization of SKY in corporate, educational, and wellness settings. However, as with any potent physiological intervention, responses are individualized. The effects of rhythmic hyperventilation, breath retention, or prolonged fast breathing can vary dramatically based on factors such as cardiovascular health, metabolic function, hormonal balance, trauma history, and psychological resilience.

Understanding this variability does not diminish the value of Sudarshan Kriya Yoga; it simply places it within the realistic spectrum of human diversity. Just as a medication or exercise regimen requires medical oversight, advanced pranayama techniques demand discernment and adaptation, given that Sudarshan Kriya Yoga in fact is defined as an advanced breathing exercise according to **THE ART OF LIVING FOUNDATION'S** Medical Information Form which is referenced in its online course registration webpage. The notion that one practice suits all bodies and minds belongs to a more naïve era of spiritual optimism- one that modern yoga practitioners are now mature enough to move beyond.

The Anatomy of a Powerful Technique

A typical SKY session involves several stages of preparatory breathing followed by the main sequence - commonly referred to as the long Sudarshan Kriya. During this stage, practitioners move through patterned cycles of breathing, each rhythm corresponding to specific physiological shifts. These shifts influence oxygen and carbon dioxide balance, blood pressure, and neural activation. While healthy, medically fit, or experienced practitioners may experience a state of deep calm through Sudarshan Kriya Yoga (SKY), those who are unprepared, physically fragile, or mentally vulnerable may face significant health risks. For such individuals, engaging in the practice, especially when underlying conditions are present, can lead to contraindications and adverse effects. These may range from mild symptoms such as dizziness, tingling, numbness in the extremities, headaches, or fever, to more serious reactions including palpitations, elevated blood pressure, intense emotional release, or worsening of mental health conditions like depression.

Such responses are not always signs of "spiritual cleansing" or "purification," but rather indicators of the body's physiological reaction to rapid shifts in blood chemistry and autonomic function. In many cases, these symptoms warrant medical attention. Recognizing this physiological reality does not diminish the practice's spiritual depth or its potential benefits, it demonstrates respect for the practitioner's physical and psychological limits.

The Risk of Practicing with Contraindications

Although SKY can be transformative for many, it carries specific **contraindications**, conditions under which the practice may pose serious risks. These are discussed in greater detail in later sections of this book and elaborated further in Chapter 5. In essence, the physical conditions for which SKY is contraindicated include: uncontrolled hypertension, heart disease, high or low blood pressure, diabetes, glaucoma, active asthma or COPD, tuberculosis, severe migraines or headaches, post-surgical recovery or serious injuries, chronic back pain, and pregnancy. Mental health contraindications include: schizophrenia, bipolar disorder (particularly Type I mania), psychosis, dissociative disorders, PTSD with

dissociation (including from childhood trauma), suicidal ideation, post-partum depression, ongoing psychiatric treatment, and substance or alcohol addiction.

Practicing SKY despite having any of these conditions, whether known or unidentified, can trigger a range of adverse reactions. Physically, participants may experience dizziness, palpitations, increased blood pressure, hyperventilation, or aggravation of underlying cardiovascular, respiratory, or neurological issues. Psychologically, the intensity of the breathing sequences can provoke emotional instability, panic, dissociation, or worsening of existing psychiatric symptoms. As emphasized earlier, these reactions are not evidence of spiritual purification but of the body's physiological and neurological responses to the intensity of the practice, responses that may be easily overlooked in group settings where scientific understanding is overshadowed by idealized or mystical interpretations. Ignoring contraindications can lead to moderate or even severe harm, sometimes requiring medical intervention. Recognizing and respecting these limitations allows practitioners to engage in SKY safely and responsibly, honoring both the potential benefits of the practice and the body's innate intelligence.

Why Safety Literacy Matters

The question is not whether Sudarshan Kriya Yoga is beneficial - it clearly can be - but whether its practice culture supports informed, individualized safety. For this, what is needed is safety literacy: a basic and openly informed awareness among instructors and participants of how health, contraindications, and adverse effects intersect in breath-based yoga.

Safety literacy involves more than medical disclaimers; it includes:

- Understanding who should modify, avoid, or approach the practice gradually.
- Recognizing early signs of distress and knowing when to pause.
- Creating non-judgmental environments where participants can report discomfort without stigma.
- Ensuring that organizational policies align with ethical and clinical awareness.
- Ensuring that information about potential health risks and necessary precautions related to Sudarshan Kriya Yoga is communicated transparently across all media and promotional materials - similar to how contraindications for widely practiced breathing techniques such as Kapalbhati Pranayama and Bhastrika Pranayama are clearly documented and shared in advance with practitioners.

The Cultural Bias of SKY Breathwork

In many spiritual contexts, particularly within guru-centered traditions, discomfort experienced during practice is often reframed as purification, detoxification, or karmic release, while questioning the guru or the guru's methods may be regarded as almost sacrilegious. Although such interpretations may hold

symbolic or experiential significance, they can sometimes obscure genuine physiological or psychological signals. A participant experiencing panic, dizziness, heightened suicidal thoughts, exacerbation of an underlying mental health condition, elevated blood pressure, or heart palpitations, for instance, may be advised to "trust the process," even when their body is clearly communicating distress.

Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, however, has at times encouraged open questioning about his teachings and practices in his interviews, urging seekers to accept them only if they resonate with their own direct experience. This spirit of inquiry, however, is not commonly reflected in the attitudes of many teachers and volunteers within **THE ART OF LIVING FOUNDATION**, who tend to present the teachings and especially practices as sacred, authoritative, and beyond reproach, often at the expense of questioning their physiological and psychological for individuals with diverse backgrounds, health profiles and underlying conditions. For people practicing today, the main challenge is to see both sides: to appreciate the spiritual growth and potential health benefits that can arise from the practice, while also staying attentive to how the body and mind actually respond, so that, at the first sign of any adverse effects, the practice can be adjusted to suit the practitioner's health. When these two perspectives are understood together, Sudarshan Kriya Yoga can become a more conscious and responsible practice, one that honors both science and the sacredness of breath.

Looking Ahead

The chapters that follow will examine how these principles play out in real-world settings. Through a series of participant scenarios, we will explore the practical interplay between health risks, contraindications, and adverse effects. Each scenario illustrates not only how harm can occur, but also how it can be prevented - through better screening, communication, and ongoing teacher training. The purpose is not to discourage the practice of Sudarshan Kriya, but to deepen it - to help practitioners, instructors, and organizations alike engage with Sudarshan Kriya Yoga in a more discerning, contraindication aware, trauma informed, and compassionate way.

When practiced with awareness, SKY can indeed be a tool for harmony. But harmony arises not from intensity alone, rather from the intelligent alignment of intention, method, and individual readiness.
Breath, after all, is the rhythm of life itself -
and to work with it safely is to honor the very life it sustains.

Chapter 02
The Interplay of Health Risks, Contraindications, and Adverse Effects in Practice of Sudarshan Kriya Yoga

"Every discipline of breath invites both transformation and responsibility.
This chapter explores the meeting point between intention and physiology
where spiritual aspiration encounters biological reality.
It reminds us that even sacred techniques require
discernment, moderation, and medical awareness"

While Sudarshan Kriya Yoga (SKY) is widely regarded as a transformative breathwork practice, often celebrated for its physiological and psychological benefits, its effects - and indeed its safety - depend greatly on individual health profiles, the quality of instruction, and the presence of adequate safeguards. Like many powerful breathing techniques, SKY also carries certain **contraindications** - specific health conditions or circumstances under which the practice may pose risks or require modification. Understanding these contraindications as essential **health precautions** helps ensure that the practice remains both effective and safe for diverse participants. These contraindications are discussed in greater detail in later sections of this book and elaborated further in Chapter 5.

The present chapter however examines the real-world dynamics between health risks, contraindications, and adverse effects, using common participant scenarios drawn from SKY programs to illuminate where liabilities and responsibilities arise. The example scenarios that follow highlight critical gaps in health screening, practice instructions, weekly follow-ups, and organizational policy. They also help delineate the boundaries of accountability - between the practitioner, the instructor, and the broader teaching organization.

Scenario 1: Healthy Participants with No Known Health Conditions

Participants who report no medical or psychological concerns are generally regarded as low-risk. However, even within this group, transient responses such as dizziness, headaches, tingling sensations, or emotional fluctuations are relatively common. The absence of known contraindications does not equate to complete immunity from adverse effects. Factors such as individual physiological variability, undiagnosed conditions, and the inherent intensity of the SKY practice can still elicit mild to moderate reactions. Instructors should therefore remain observant and responsive to participants' experiences. In most healthy individuals, these temporary symptoms typically subside as the body gradually acclimates to the practice.

Scenario 2: Participants Who Declare Known Health Conditions (Contraindications)

Some participants disclose pre-existing medical conditions - such as hypertension, asthma, epilepsy, or psychiatric disorders - at the time of registration. Ideally, such disclosures should prompt a structured screening process, possible medical clearance, and the adaptation of practice protocols to ensure safety. With adequately trained instructors and well-defined organizational guidelines, these individuals can often engage in safely modified versions of SKY.

However, when instructors lack sufficient medical literacy, overlook declared contraindications, or fail to adjust the practice appropriately, participants are exposed to preventable risks. **As a result, genuine adverse reactions - stemming from the mismatch between the participant's condition and the intensity of the practice - may be mistaken for "detoxification" or "spiritual release," which can inadvertently worsen the underlying medical issue that a participant has but is misunderstood or unscreened by the instructor or course teacher.** Depending on the nature and severity of the health condition, consequences can range from moderate discomfort to severe, and in rare cases, irreversible harm. Later sections of this book provide firsthand accounts and case-based reviews that illustrate such adverse outcomes in practice.

Scenario 3: Participants Who Have Known Health Conditions but Conceal or Do Not Declare Them

Sometimes, participants choose not to disclose existing health issues - whether due to stigma, fear of being turned away, a belief that their condition is irrelevant, concerns about privacy, or other self-limiting beliefs. When a program relies solely on self-reporting, without guided questioning or basic medical screening, such cases often go unnoticed. Undisclosed contraindications significantly increase the likelihood of adverse effects during or after practice. The manifestation of these effects can vary - appearing either in the short or long term - depending on factors such as the individual's inherent resilience, the body's ability to restore balance, and the presence of any compromised health conditions. In individuals with reduced physiological or psychological capacity, the body's natural self-regulating mechanisms may be weaker, resulting in faster or more pronounced onset of symptoms. Without awareness of these underlying vulnerabilities, instructors may unintentionally guide participants through practices of unsuitable intensity or pacing, thereby causing avoidable harm. An over-reliance on self-disclosure, in the absence of structured health inquiry or instructor awareness, poses a systemic risk. Effective screening should include not only a self-declaration form but also a symptom-based questionnaire and, where relevant, a review of recent medical reports, past surgical history, genetic predispositions, and any indications of progressive or deteriorating health conditions.

Scenario 4: Participants With No Known or Identified Health Conditions, But Who Are Undiagnosed

In this scenario, participants are genuinely unaware of underlying medical or psychological conditions- perhaps early-stage hypertension, an anxiety disorder, or a thyroid imbalance. In worse cases they have more serious underlying conditions such as an undiagnosed heart condition or a vascular malformation which they are not aware of. These issues may be triggered or worsened by intense breathwork like SKY, and more particularly the offline version of the long sudarshan kriya which is far more intense and physically demanding. In the absence of recommended annual health screenings or medical check-ups, undiagnosed contraindications remain hidden. Practice continues as if risk-free- until adverse effects manifest. Without structured guidance encouraging preventive health checks before participating in a course to learn the Sudarshan Kriya Yoga, the organization misses opportunities to pre-emptively identify risk.

Scenario 5: Participants With Health Conditions That Are Undiagnosed, Undeclared, and Unscreened

This group presents a high-risk profile. The participant is unaware of a contraindicated condition, has not declared it, and was not screened like a participant experiencing chest discomfort or pains (which could be due to undiagnosed angina or a cardiovascular condition), headaches (which could be due to undiagnosed High Blood Pressure), hearing voices or having intrusive thoughts (which could be due to undiagnosed schizophrenia, or schizoaffective disorders) flashbacks from a traumatic incident (signifies possibility of having undiagnosed PTSD or complex PTSD) all of these being serious conditions under which Sudarshan Kriya must be modified or avoided or learnt under careful supervision according to the medical information form or health policies for Sudarshan Kriya yoga published by **THE ART OF LIVING FOUNDATION**. From the instructor's perspective, the participant appears "healthy." In reality, the practice may be acting on a fragile physiological or psychological base. When adverse effects occur (e.g., panic, insomnia, blood pressure spikes), they may be minimized or spiritualized- delaying proper diagnosis and medical care. This reveals a lack of integrated safety checks and highlights the need for robust teacher training to identify subtle warning signs and to maintain an open, non-dismissive dialogue about symptoms.

Scenario 6: Participants Who Declared Conditions, But Teachers Did Not Screen or Offer Modifications

Perhaps the most ethically concerning scenario: a participant responsibly reports their condition, but the teacher- due to lack of training, overconfidence, or organizational neglect- fails to properly assess and modify the practice. The participant may experience worsening symptoms or injury, leading to avoidable harm. Worse still, symptoms may be explained away by the instructor as part of a "cleansing" or "release," denying the participant the opportunity to reassess or seek medical advice. Here, the breakdown is not

with the participant but within the teaching system- where medical red flags are ignored, and contraindications are treated as symbolic rather than clinical.

Scenario 7: Participants Who Learned SKY While Healthy, But Later Developed Contraindications

Many long-term practitioners initially learned SKY while healthy. Over time, they may develop conditions that render the full practice unsuitable- such as cardiac issues, migraines, or anxiety. If they were never informed that the practice may need to be modified based on health changes, they are likely to continue unchanged. Teachers may unknowingly encourage full practice, even in the presence of symptoms- reassuring participants that the discomfort is temporary or spiritual in nature. This can lead to chronic aggravation or serious medical consequences. This scenario illustrates the lack of follow-up, absence of periodic re-evaluation, and the urgent need for participant education about evolving contraindications.

Over-Spiritualization of Adverse Effects

Across all the above scenarios, one common thread is the tendency to interpret adverse effects as spiritual purification, karmic release, or emotional detox. While SKY may facilitate emotional processing, this lens becomes harmful when:

- Physical or psychological symptoms are ignored
- Participants are encouraged to “push through” discomfort
- Medical care is delayed or dismissed
- Health risks are reframed as spiritual tests or purification or cleansing

Cultural Bias: This mindset normalizes suffering, discourages open dialogue about difficulties, and obscures real harm- especially in participants with pre-existing or emerging health issues.

Missed Opportunity: The Need for a Medical Safety Protocol

Despite the known physiological and psychological intensity of SKY, few SKY programs mandate or even recommend basic health screenings, such as:

- Annual medical check-ups
- Mental health self-assessments
- Written physician consent for those with known conditions

Embedding simple, scalable health screening protocols into program registration- especially for older adults or those with prior health histories- could significantly reduce risk, while empowering participants to take greater ownership of their well-being. Each of the above scenarios demonstrates how health risks,

contraindications, and adverse effects are interconnected- but not inevitable. With proper awareness, policies, and instruction, SKY can be practiced more safely and ethically. But this requires a cultural shift:

- From blind faith and magical thinking to informed participation
- From one-size-fits-all to individualized practice
- From dismissive reassurance to clinical responsibility

Ultimately, honouring the power of practices like Sudarshan Kriya also means respecting the body's boundaries, recognizing vulnerability, and adapting the practice to serve life- rather than override it.

When seen through the lens of balance, caution becomes care rather than fear. Understanding contraindications allows the practice to serve the practitioner, not the reverse.
Informed awareness is itself a form of devotion.

Chapter 03
Understanding Reported Adverse Effects

"Testimonies are living data.
They are not statistics but stories of how breath touched individual bodies and minds.
This chapter introduces the real experiences and patterns that emerge when hundreds of such voices are placed side by side -a mosaic of adverse experiences that asks for listening more than judging"

In the pages of these that follow, this book shifts focus to a critical and necessary exploration of the adverse effects reported by participants of **THE ART OF LIVING FOUNDATION'S** programs. Drawing from a wide array of publicly available testimonials, online reviews, personal accounts, and anonymous contributions from former teachers and insiders, these sections aim to provide a balanced and respectful yet honest account of experiences that diverge from the often-celebrated public image of the organization. These reports are not presented to discredit individual experiences of benefit or to negate the possible value many have found in the practices taught by the Foundation. Rather, the intention is to create space for a fuller picture- one that includes not just stories of transformation and healing, but also accounts of harm, confusion, or unacknowledged distress. For clarity and accessibility, the reported effects have been grouped according to affected domains- whether psychological, physiological, emotional, or social. Each section presents relevant testimonials and reflections, followed by a deeper analysis of the possible causes or contributing factors. Where appropriate, the book brings in current scientific explanations, other related quotes and commentary to help contextualize these effects and offer evidence-based insight into the mechanisms at play.

The aim here is not to sensationalize, but to educate. By contextualizing these experiences within a broader scientific and psychological framework, readers are offered the tools to better understand why such outcomes may occur, who might be more vulnerable, and what safeguards or considerations may be prudent before, during, or after engaging in such intensive spiritual practices. In doing so, this section also brings to light certain structural gaps within **THE ART OF LIVING'S** teaching methodologies- especially concerning transparency, feedback mechanisms, and systems for acknowledging or addressing participant distress. Highlighting these shortcomings is not an indictment of the foundation as a whole, but an invitation for greater introspection, dialogue, and, ultimately, improvement in how well-being practices are taught, monitored, and supported. The goal is to ensure that readers are equipped with a fuller, more nuanced understanding- one that honors both the potential benefits and the possible risks involved. With this balanced perspective, individuals can make better-informed decisions about their own journeys into practices that promise personal transformation. Ultimately, this inquiry underscores a broader truth about the landscape of contemporary spirituality and self-development- that no practice,

however well-intentioned or widely acclaimed, is immune to complexity. Every system of transformation carries with it a shadow, a set of unintended consequences that may emerge in certain contexts or for certain individuals.

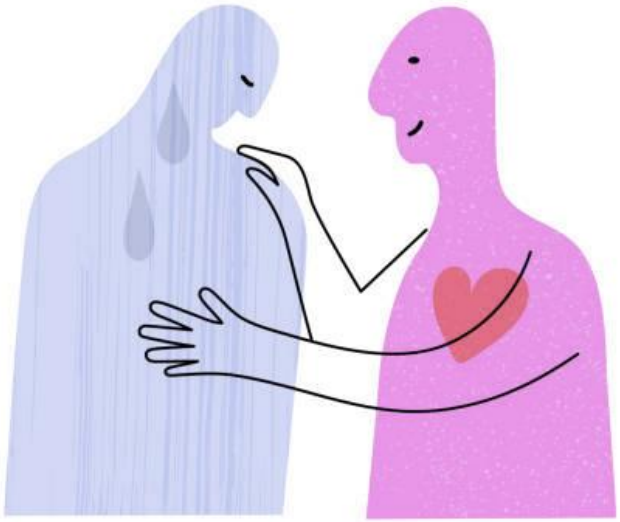
Understanding these shadows does not diminish the light of what is valuable; rather, it sharpens discernment and deepens collective responsibility toward fostering practices that are both powerful and safe. Moreover, the voices represented in these chapters serve as an essential counterbalance to the tendency toward idealization that often surrounds charismatic movements and their leaders. When narratives of perfection dominate, space for genuine human experience- especially of doubt, struggle, or disillusionment- tends to shrink. By giving visibility to these quieter, sometimes uncomfortable stories, the book contributes to a more honest and compassionate dialogue about the nature of spiritual seeking itself, and about how community structures can either support or silence that vulnerability. Finally, this section invites readers, practitioners, and teachers alike to engage with humility and curiosity rather than judgment.

The intention is not to assign blame but to foster awareness- awareness that can lead to reform, better support systems, and a more ethically grounded approach to teaching and learning. In a world increasingly drawn to quick fixes and instant enlightenment, such reflection becomes not just beneficial but essential. It is through the willingness to examine both the light and the shadow that any path of transformation becomes truly whole.

Numbers tell trends; narratives tell truths.
Together they shape a fuller picture of what responsible breathwork must embrace.

Approached with empathy, these experiences invite us not only to listen but to become instruments of healing and compassion, restoring dignity, understanding, and the possibility of wellbeing to those who have suffered.

To read these accounts with empathy is to honor the human story behind the data. Each testimony is a voice asking to be understood, a truth seeking to be witnessed.



Empathy doesn't require that we have the exact same experiences as the person sharing their story with us...

Empathy is connecting with the emotion that someone is experiencing, not the event or the circumstance. Empathy is a strange and powerful thing. It's simply listening, holding space, withholding judgment, emotionally connecting, and communicating that incredibly healing message of You're not alone.

— Brené Brown

Reported Adverse Effects Domain 1- Sleep Disorder & Visual Health

SUMMARY OF ADVERSE REACTIONS AND SIDE EFFECTS

ACTUAL LIST OF ADVERSE SYMPTOMS REPORTED IN ONLINE REVIEWS AND COMMENTS:
INSOMNIA, SLEEP CYCLE DISTURBANCES, DIMNESS OF VISION

NUMBER OF CASES REPORTED:
AT LEAST **12** FOUND ON INTERNET. THERE ARE MORE SUSPECTED TO BE OFFLINE OR UNREPORTED ON INTERNET

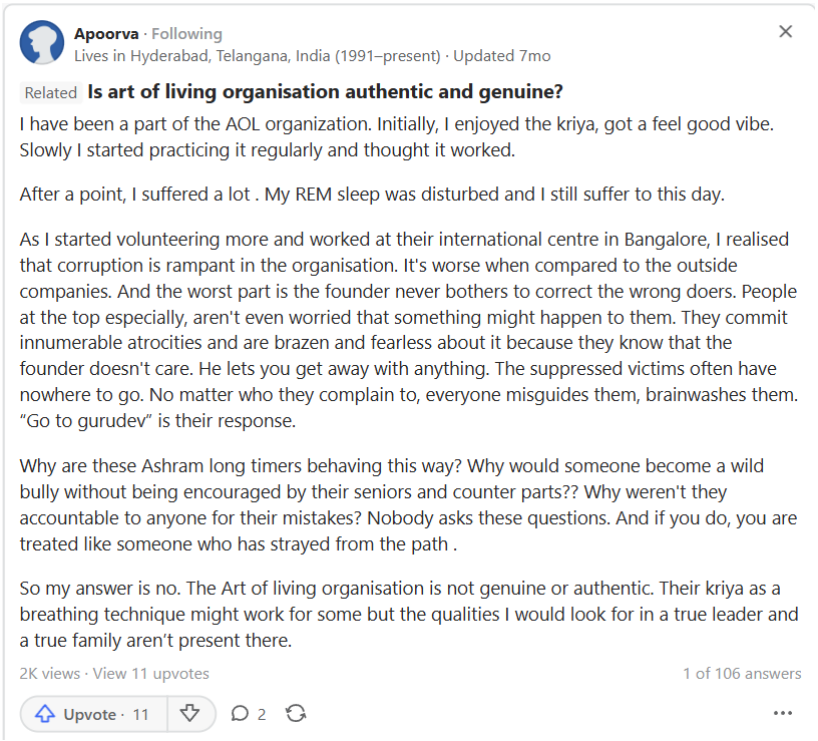
INSTANCES OF ADVERSE REACTIONS AND SIDE EFFECTS REPORTED ONLINE

#1.1

Anonymous PERMALINK
April 12, 2012 4:24 am

Hi , I am a student and I just started doin SK. My only diffence I believe SK has brought about in 4 days of practice is that I sleep on time (11pm) but on the other hand I wake up at different times sometime 1 am ,2 am or 3 am without any alarm(though I put an alarm for 4am. I wanted to ask you is it normal.... ????? Earlier to doing I didn't follow any specific timings and slept and woke up according to my convenience.... some time slept in the morning @7am but never before 2 am.... And one more thing when I did SK in asharam post kriya my enery levels were very high and positive but that is not the case when I do SK in my hostel room with my roomi sleeping....

#1.2



Apoorva · Following
Lives in Hyderabad, Telangana, India (1991–present) · Updated 7mo

Related **Is art of living organisation authentic and genuine?**

I have been a part of the AOL organization. Initially, I enjoyed the kriya, got a feel good vibe. Slowly I started practicing it regularly and thought it worked.

After a point, I suffered a lot . My REM sleep was disturbed and I still suffer to this day.

As I started volunteering more and worked at their international centre in Bangalore, I realised that corruption is rampant in the organisation. It's worse when compared to the outside companies. And the worst part is the founder never bothers to correct the wrong doers. People at the top especially, aren't even worried that something might happen to them. They commit innumerable atrocities and are brazen and fearless about it because they know that the founder doesn't care. He lets you get away with anything. The suppressed victims often have nowhere to go. No matter who they complain to, everyone misguides them, brainwashes them. "Go to gurudev" is their response.

Why are these Ashram long timers behaving this way? Why would someone become a wild bully without being encouraged by their seniors and counter parts?? Why weren't they accountable to anyone for their mistakes? Nobody asks these questions. And if you do, you are treated like someone who has strayed from the path .

So my answer is no. The Art of living organisation is not genuine or authentic. Their kriya as a breathing technique might work for some but the qualities I would look for in a true leader and a true family aren't present there.

2K views · View 11 upvotes 1 of 106 answers

Upvote · 11 2

#1.3

kk PERMALINK

May 18, 2012 12:23 pm

Hi All, I did Sudarshan kriya, some times and decided to stop as I found the technique is not natural(breathing fast and slow) and harmful to my body. I suffered from head aches, sleeplessness, confusion and irritation. I have been practising martial arts for 2.5 years and I never had such bad experiences. I would say, take care when you interefering with your breath and don't simply listen to AOL teachers. Use your brain! This is a big business now-a-days. Supporting factor: almost 85% people who attended the classess complained about various body related problems and these issues were ignored as 'body is getting rid of toxin'

Kk

#1.4

Anonymous PERMALINK

March 28, 2011 1:19 pm

Contrary to AOL claims, in my experience the practices had an adverse effect on short term memory, the ability to focus, and the ability to sleep.

#1.5

Ridz PERMALINK

March 7, 2011 12:57 pm

I have seen many youth in the Ashram with dark circles and graying hair – I really think it is a side effect of the Sudarshan Kriya!

#1.6

Vineeta PERMALINK

March 9, 2011 11:37 am

The dark circles are mainly due to lack of sleep due to improper breathing. Doing too much of energizing breathing causes lack of sleep. Grey hair may be due to old age. Maybe like guruji they should all start dyeing hair.

#1.7

Anonymous said...

I had done AOL course in 2007 and I feel very happy at that time , But when I keep doing the SK & P regularly I feel that my energy was shattered and I am feeling very week physically ,I am having dark circles around my eyes . I know that it is only because of SK&P so I decided not to do it , after one week of time I again gained my energy back and dark circles were gone.

My wife had done the same in 2007 and she was find it to be very good her depression gone stabilized her mind gaining energy and she feels to be very happy .
Again we both done same course but this time I feel myself to be reverse , gaining energy balance of mind happy feeling , but my wife gone through bad effects she feels uneasyness and she feels darkness in her sight and same day I used to take her to the doctor .now she is feeling alright with the help of the medicines .
I think SK&P will provide you instant short term benefits . and it changed person to person and time to time . what exactly I don't know but one of my friend also feel the same.

Moreover if you find any member in AOL who is poor and needy then plaese let me know, all rich , influential,beautiful people are there.
why it is like that poor people are not human beings, can AOL conduct a course free of cost for the poor people .

They conduct the courses in jails and with the terrorist, naxalites for their own publicity ,of course free of cost .
And they ask you to bring more members who are like you, powerful, rich, influential and celebrities .

SEPTEMBER 15, 2010 AT 5:16 AM

#1.8

Badosen

March 9, 2012 at 10:50 am

Hey,

Definitely follow your heart. Do consider doing the sk breaths extremely softly.

I used to stay up to 4am if I did sk in the morning. I found I was doing the breaths too hard. This was overstimulating.

I now don't even count breaths, just change pace intuitively.

Reply

#1.9

nz

September 1, 2012 at 1:04 am

One of my frnd is suffering from over conciousness, hyper tention, migraine, insomnia, body ache as she is constantly doing sk since long n she is still not ready to accept the fact that dis is affecting her health so badly, it seriously make me feel bad and helpless. It's very inhuman, how can dey sale dis crap by the name of spirituality. N the most idiotic thing I noticed in most of the aol followers they cn argue on baseless facts, I Dnt Knw what these teachers feed in there brain which make them so absent minded. Well, thank you so much guys for sharing your experiences I hope it will help me further.

Reply

#1.10

r/Ex_ArtOfLiving • 5 mo. ago
Throwaway-lhj

Sharing and questions about kriya (ex-AoL-er here) - night kriyas, affecting concentration, hand movements

(background: went for SKY and sahaj at first, found them helpful, but had bad experience with silent retreat and *felt* they weren't responsible/AoL-the-organisation wasn't for me)

since i don't want to ask them, do any of you have thoughts on the following? or it'd just be nice to chat/relate too:).

1. doing kriya at night? i feel like making a poll here, i feel like it does affect my sleep sometimes?? but also it's tempting sometimes.
2. don't feel like doing thinking work (as a uni student) after kriya sometimes. I feel like i should get in the flow of studying before doing kriya to reinforce it or something if that makes sense haha
3. doing kriya (bhastrika etc.) without hand movements - quite often recently when i'm a bit tired (but still feel the pranayamas help). It's ok right
4. curious: does anyone do kriya etc. like every few days/even week? every day seems like an easy rhythm to follow, but i'm still trying out how-frequent works best for me
5. a more-for-fun question: breathwork/~~kriya~~ while travelling/staying in hostels - if anyone has experience to share haha

#1.11

@psycho9153 2 years ago

I am the one who went directly to the ashram and did sudarshankriya
....the feeling of burning gunpowder after doing this sudarshan kriya.....the body will freeze and the eyes will be dark.....I have seen someone who had a heart attack due to the intensity of this experience after opening his eyes while doing sudarshan kriya...

See original (Translated by Google)

54 Reply

34 replies

@psycho9153 2 years ago

The person was saved by reaching the hospital on time

See original (Translated by Google)

#1.12

Ram *says:*
April 7, 2023 at 10:31 am

I had terrible experience after practising SKY for a month.
Earlier last month, I was on a break from work. Given the free time and my mind mentally exhausted from Job burnout and other stressors in life I decided to give SKY a try. I did the weekend course and everything looked fine, I thought I will commit to it for the 40 days they want you to and see.

The first day I did it, I was feeling very much on the edge. I was feeling happy but I was also feeling very "eager" to do stuff. I think I got some energy / kick out of it and I started doing some things. But in a couple of days, while the happy feeling was there, I could my body was dehydrated – I was feeling extremely thirsty. I drank and drank lots of water. Within a week or so, I didn't feel the need to exercise – I thought that was strange! I thought, may be my body was rejuvenated so I probably did not need the exercise. In about a week to 10 days – I noticed that my eyesight had become week. Yes, my eyesight – and it was definitely due to my mind being tired from the effects of SKY. I believe it was due to lack of Oxygen.

Anyway, 2-3 weeks later I caught Covid. I continued doing it in Covid for a couple of days. Then one not so fine morning, I could not sleep the night before very well, I woke with a sore throat and wanted to rush to the bathroom. Next thing I know I FAINTED!! I banged my head on the bathroom counter and injured my eye, my jaw, teeth etc. I ran to the ER to get treatment. They treated and told me to drink lots of water – NOW that is when I realized the thirst I had felt before long before had caught up to me. Also the mental exhaustion that SKY practice was causing – all of those culminated in me Fainting.

Few days later while recovering from Covid, I tried doing the practice again. This time I did it very mildly. But oh boy that same evening and the next few days (today included) – I felt like I would fall and pass out again. I am not doing Sudarshan or any such kriya ever again. Hyperventilation is real – such deep heavy breathing causes the brain to get strained and get less oxygen.

I had tried Sadhguru's Shambhavi a few years ago and I had to stop it as I did not feel it effective at all. The fast breathing component in it as well was not working for me.

I thought I would give Sudarshan kriya a try after all these years but oh boy – this is worse.

I will stick to my practice of Anulom vilom – I think it's the best Pranayama for most people (for me anyways).

Thank you for posting this article. I will try to share my experience with as many folks as possible.

Wish everyone well.

Reply

"These accounts remind us that altered breathing especially with breath holding and fast breathing patterns in the Sudarshan Kriya Yoga can alter the body's circadian and ocular rhythms in subtle ways. Rest, hydration, and moderation often restore balance.
May this knowledge inspire instructors to teach with sensitivity and practitioners to honour their limits"

Reported Adverse Effects Domain 2- Neuro-Physiological Health

SUMMARY OF ADVERSE REACTIONS AND SIDE EFFECTS

ACTUAL LIST OF ADVERSE SYMPTOMS REPORTED IN ONLINE REVIEWS AND COMMENTS:
SKIN REACTIONS AND IMMUNE RESPONSE, DIZZINESS, HEAVINESS IN HEAD, HEADACHES, MIGRAINES, MALAISE OR FEELING SICK, DIZZINESS, HEADACHE, NERVOUSNESS, CHEST PAIN/DISCOMFORT

NUMBER OF CASES REPORTED:
AT LEAST 36 FOUND ON INTERNET. THERE ARE MORE SUSPECTED TO BE OFFLINE OR UNREPORTED ON INTERNET

INSTANCES OF ADVERSE REACTIONS AND SIDE EFFECTS REPORTED ONLINE

#2.1

by The Doctor *tags:* Deceit, Health Issues, Sudarshan Kriya

> *I did the kriya for several years. I also taught. I developed allergies which I never had, to dust, mites, pollen. I began getting bronchitis very often, and even had pneumonia twice (when I was teaching)! I no longer do the long Kriya, and rarely do even the short one at home because of my lung difficulties that came from the practice. If I get a cold, it immediately goes to my lungs. I've seen a pulmonary specialist as a result (I'm way too young for all this junk to be happening, btw) and he tested me and said "you have lungs 15-20 years beyond your age...." and showed me all sorts of awful looking stuff on my xray. I know my lungs were normal before because I had a mandatory health physical for work before learning the Kriya, and was told I was in excellent health. It included a chest xray. I have a cough that never goes away, now, and sounds deep and hollow. The doctor has recommended an inhaler, and stated that I have asthma (didn't have it before the Kriya). So go figure. I think Kriya is bad for health, especially if one is a teacher and does more long Kriyas.*

#2.2

Latha Murthy · 4y
Even I experience heavy dizzeness and two days mind heaviness n heavy fatigue that I need to apply leave and take rest after my first sudarshan kriya that's the second day of the course..... .i was asked to take off for remaining 2 days of course and later I would join any other batch and continue...but I was told all my ailments are coming out like this but not to worry but continue which I believed... today sll of a sudden I felt I will explore more about the this problem n shocked to c... ooh... all what you said is true... n there is no need to keep it so secret...

#2.3

Nithya Sadhana PERMALINK

October 2, 2010 4:47 am

Rupali
I had a somewhat similar effect from sudarshan kriya. I started getting heat boils and mouth ulcers due to sudarshan kriya. Apart from that I never felt meditative, centered and relaxed as I previously used to feel when I was practicing other techniques. When I told this to Guruji Ravishankar, he mentioned to me not to practice sudarshan kriya and do padmasadhana and sahaj instead. I have found this practice of padmasadhana and sahaj beneficial over last three years. Earlier I had practiced TM for 4 years and in a way it is a continuation of the same practice. It is not that sudarshan kriya is beneficial always. But unfortunately there are overzealous teachers who of their way in the propoganda and cause harm to some people. Always listen to your body and energy.

#2.4

Posted on December 1, 2010 by Ach. Agyaatadarshan Anand Nath

Thanks for highligting the dangers of pranayama. In order to rid myself of my stomach ailment i have tried Sri Sri Ravishankar's sudarshan kriya . Sudarshan Kriya worsened my situation so bad that I was almost bed ridden for a week with fever and headaches, I got heat boils and skin rashes and even piles from sudarshan kriya. It was only after I stopped this and took triphala i got some relief.

After this I tried baba ramdev's pranayama, all the seven. I think Ramdev is too simplistic to claim everythign will be cured by these seven pranayamas. I did it all and my digestion only worsened and I started getting nervous and fidgety. I realised that the culprit is kapalabhati. I was doing this for 10 minutes. The days i stopped doing kapalabhati it was okay. I slowly switched to doing only Anulom Vilom and things got better for me. Now I do suryanamaskaras and anulom vilom. If someone had warned me earlier of dangers of rapid and quick pranayamas like kapalabhati, bhastrika and sudarshan kriya it would have save me from lot of suffering.

Thanks for this blog. i think these holy businessmen willdo anything and claim anything to sell their products. Yoga is great if it is applied judiciously else it can be dangerous. Thanks for this blog and may your tribe increase.

– Subhash

#2.5

I am here because few days back I joined the AOL 6 days course, on second day upon doing sudarsana kriya, I experienced tiredness, short of breath, same day night fell sick, today is 6th day, still down with fever, headache and cough. I was perfectly alright until I started performing this. ...

#2.6

Nagesh PERMALINK

July 25, 2011 8:19 am

AOL teaching sudarshan kriya is based on a false hypothesis that sudarshan kriya is a solution for all things from disease to divinity. However my experience and observations have proved it otherwise. As teachers we used to blindly repeat this propoganda and in turn this has harmed many many people.
I was one of the first teachers in AOL. After having taught and experienced Sudarshan Kriya for more than seven years in the 90s, I can very confidently claim that it has harmed more people than done good. A real impartial scientific study will completely expose this. Not the bogus scientific research sponsored by AOL. Most of these research was done with a conclusion in mind by paid so called researchers. This was the same group of crooks who proclaimed the so called 'Maharishi effect' and the bogus reports on TM. Ravi just inherited this.
Most of the good effects claimed were hype created through propoganda. I personally know many long term practitioners who took all the propoganda seriously and they have ended up with all kinds of diseases. In my experience as a teacher and assisting other teachers, I have found that not more than 1% of the people who take up AOL continue the practice of sudarshan kriya. This is because their body rejects this so called getting into natural rhythm. None of the old timers I know practice kriya including many of your AOL 'Staars'. This I know from personal experience.

#2.7

Observer Jr. PERMALINK

March 28, 2011 2:15 pm

Very sorry to hear this Akshata. There's no use in talking to Harshal – he's not interested in facts. He just wants to hurt people. He won't even answer simple questions asked by the doctor.

While I didn't develop the problems you had, my allergies went away within a few months after stopping the practice of kriya. I wonder if someday we'll see a large lawsuit against AOL for all the health problems it caused many people…

Thanks for sharing your story – it will help others question the practice.

#2.8

Observer Jr. PERMALINK

March 29, 2011 1:08 pm

Welcome.

You'll find more than just a few people here have had major problems with kriya, myself included. I practiced it fairly regularly for 8 years. I was in great health, but I began seeing problems after 4 years, and grew worse after that. All my issues healed after a few months of stopping kriya. It was proof to me that the practice was dangerous.

Is it dangerous for all? Probably not. Some appear to have good experiences, including yourself. Not everyone can follow the same diet, and not everyone can do the same practices.

If you continue to practice, just monitor your health very carefully. Watch for signs like eyes getting dark circles. allergy issues may come from nowhere, blood pressure or pulse problems are possible, energy level may reduce significantly, critical thinking or desire for life may disappear… these are all very possible when practicing kriya for the long term.

#2.9

anonymous PERMALINK

December 10, 2010 4:02 pm

OASCS: Be careful with the water — the original "water cure" man died, not long ago of, guess what, kidney failure! Too much water is really bad for your kidneys. 2-3 liters, unless you are living in hot sun, working outside, sweating all the time, is waaaaayyyy too much over time.

I did the kriya for several years. I also taught. I developed allergies which I never had, to dust, mites, pollen. I began getting bronchitis very often, and even had pneumonia twice (when I was teaching)! I no longer do the long Kriya, and rarely do even the short one at home because of my lung difficulties that came from the practice. If I get a cold, it immediately goes to my lungs. I've seen a pulmonary specialist as a result (I'm way too young for all this junk to be happening, btw) and he tested me and said "you have lungs 15-20 years beyond your age...." and showed me all sorts of awful looking stuff on my xray. I know my lungs were normal before because I had a mandatory health physical for work before learning the Kriya, and was told I was in excellent health. It included a chest xray. I have a cough that never goes away, now, and sounds deep and hollow. The doctor has recommended an inhaler, and stated that I have asthma (didn't have it before the Kriya). So go figure. I think Kriya is bad for health, especially if one is a teacher and does more long Kriyas.

This is my experience, and that of others I know as well. Perhaps Kriya is better suited to people who live in pristine mountain air and not in towns, villages or cities where the air might not be as good? That's my guess. Also, the overworking of the lungs appears to hurt many people.

Good for yogis in the mountains. Not so good for regular folks like me and others.

#2.10

Thandesha PERMALINK

March 13, 2011 7:48 am

Thanks for this blog. I did aol course last november in bangalore. I am a gym instructor and in extreme good health and wellness and cheerful bliss most time. I practise a combination of tai chi,power yoga and cardio. I wanted to explore sudarshan kriya. After practising for three days, I felt sick and energetically congested after doing sudarshan kriya. never felt the same kind of centering and groundedness i get if i practise yoga or tai chi. I felt something is wrong with the technique because it is poorly designed. atleast this kind of breathing is not for me. Maybe some people benefit from it but personally i havent seen many doing that. Most people in my class had bad experience of kriya but were very polite and civilized to not tell it very openly in the class to the teacher. This is my 0.02 cents.

#2.11

fzr2000 PERMALINK

May 7, 2011 9:13 am

Sudarshan kriya & other breathing techniques taught in AoL are NOT yoga.

In yoga it not advisable to put stress on the body to do the breathing. in SK you just force your lungs to do the rhythmic breathing. You forcefully hyperventilate for half an hour ignoring your body's urge to breath normally.

also bhastrika pranayam is not to be done in the way taught in AoL. that technique of breathing in with hands up forcefully breathing out while putting hands down is just named bhastrika. it is not bhastrika, bhastrika is not done that way.

same apply for three stage pranayam aka known as ujjai pranayam. it is just a breathing technique AoL people have invented & selling it in the name of yoga. ujjai is not done that way. You have to breath in with a sound from throat and apply jalandhar bandh.

So in short, the breathing techniques (Particularly Sudarshan kriya) they are teaching in AoL are not yoga.

I also doubt about some asanas.

#2.12

Parveen Sharma PERMALINK

September 9, 2011 5:22 am

I have done sudarshan kirya in basic course and short kirya at home also, I have some side effect of this kirya i.e there are itches/skin infections on all body

#2.13

P **@plumba1000** 11 months ago

I have also done it.. felt a rash all over the body... nothing else.... Useless .....

See original (Translated by Google)

#2.14

WIDE AWAKE PERMALINK

February 9, 2011 8:14 am

Was sleeping as long as I was in the AOL CULT, practising SK. I was assuming that I was being cleansed , when experiencing all the -ve effects, ofcourse beleiving what the sr. teachers told me.

My experience is my reality. As you have mentioned earlier, even if a small percentage of people do have a problem with sk, is aol not supposed to declare that SK IS NOT FOR ALL? why does the Guru ignore these questions raised by his devotees? Is not their health and life important ?

Its atleast important to the individual and their family.

#2.15

Weidman PERMALINK

February 9, 2011 8:54 am

Ever since I started practicing Sudarshan Kriya, I started feeling heavy and dense, as though someone has beaten me up black and blue. I started getting dark circles around my eyes. Psychologically I was feeling a growing stupidity at my core. I got rid of all this few days after I stopped practising. This is my personal experience and true. How can I deny this.

#2.16

Prana Boy PERMALINK

March 28, 2011 4:46 pm

I am doing kriya since last one month. I somehow felt it is not something right. This post has really scared the wits out of me. I read this article on hyperventilation and heart problems.
http://emedicine.medscape.com/article/807277-overview
I am stopping this practice folks. It is too risky.

#2.17

Dr Aaditi PERMALINK

December 29, 2011 9:52 am

I'm a doctor and I know feeing tingling sensations, dizziness etc which Ravi Shankar claims are signs of getting rid of toxins are actually side effects of the breathing technique. This is because the human lung in an optimal state should be working just like it does for most people. Actually these breathing exercises make you hyperventilate which in itself is an abnormal physiological state. It is this hyperventilation that causes the acidity of our blood to become abnormal which gives rise to the above mentioned sensations. Actually certain disease states such as panic attacks are also characterised by such physiological changes. So please stop believing in Sudarshan kriya and believe in what the real God has already given you .i.e normal breathing.

ex teacher PERMALINK

June 12, 2012 3:59 pm

Doreen: it's not common practice to sign a waiver before taking a yoga class or personal development courses. I never did except with AoL! Ask around and you will see it is less common than what you think. If there is something to hide or protect, if something is not transparent, then an agreement is good for protection. AoL hides too many things and is too anxious to protect itself from just too many things! Including negative criticism. What is he so afraid of? There are too many secrets. "Don't tell, don't share, don't ...." That is the first indication it is a cult. Too many "no nos", too many secrets. He can't control everyone's opinions. Some will like him, some will not. Except, now, every negative criticism that floats around the world, he thinks it comes or was provoked by the teacher he defamed, and he will attack him/her. How childish, don't you think? How opposite of everything he preaches, don't you think? Some people don't feel any results with SK, and some people have fallen very sick from the practice of it. If you need a practice to have the energy and enthusiasm to do things in your life, well, you need to question why can you not do that without the help of a placebo? This is the flaw in the whole AoL package: it makes people rely on outside sources, instead of valuing, relying and believing in oneself more. But, he makes you believe you are. Fabulous! If you can't do any of that without the practice of it or RS, then it means all of that has no value at all!

PS: and, because you yourself make sure you follow instructions to facilitate SK, or have not seen anyone go "bad" because of SK, does not mean that is not happening too much elsewhere. Again, there are too many secrets in the AoL. There is life outside of the bubble.

#2.19

Anonymous PERMALINK

June 13, 2012 4:02 am

"Teachers following the teaching instructions review each student's health form before the class starts"

I have seen only one teacher doing this. Most of the teachers are not aware of student's health because these forms are reviewed by their assistants who look only for student's signature freeing AOL of any consequences.

"they will give that person instructions for doing a modified version of SK."

The only modified version I have heard is skipping short circles. Are there other modified versions of SK.

#2.20

anonymous PERMALINK

May 11, 2011 3:50 pm

Sorry to hear about your mother, and hope that she recovers well and lives a good life. SSRS is notorious for giving personal, wrong medical advice. He has many times privately advised people I know, and myself, to not go to a doctor, to do more practices, even that a 'cure' was in the works due to affiliation with him. I developed asthma only after some years of SK practice and association with SSRS. Also allergies. He even bragged that an illness I had was because of him, and because I had spoken back to him, and disobeyed him (!) when in fact, it was simply an untreated internal illness which should have been treated by doctors earlier, the very doctors he advised against. I feel badly for your mother and all others who suffer needlessly from all the misinformation given by Art of Living and SSRS. People get sick and need medical attention. Professional medical attention. They should not be told to just take herbs or meditate or pray or breathe when more intensive therapies are needed. Nobody likes to question when they are in Art of Living. If they do question, they either leave, or are put down or called 'schizophrenic' or 'blue star' or 'crazy' or 'not sufficiently devoted'. Whatever. I left and got a life. I realized that Art of Living was not a life. It is a mental hospital filled with patients, and I just didn't feel sufficiently crazy to stay. 🙂 I hope that all involved in AOL go out and get a life instead of living Ravi Shankar's agenda.

Mahesh PERMALINK

May 22, 2012 2:17 pm

I think your teacher did not teach you the right way. The teacher is the main culprit here. I will tell you one example marijuana is the best drug in the world and it can cure hell lot of diseases. When the American government knew that it banned marijuana is a poisonous drug because they the pharma industry which had tie ups with the Government would not get any money and even the pharma industry would go down. So if you think you can defame AOL then you are the most foolish person in the world. If there is any negativity written here about Sudarshan Kriya you surely are going to be in trouble. So get your analysis straight before you come to a conclusion . If you think breathing kills you. Then it is better not to breathe and choose death.

Anonymous PERMALINK

May 22, 2012 3:38 pm

Mahesh,

It is not defamation to state a fact. If a number of people I know (including myself) have experienced the mentioned bad effects when and after practicing SK, and we learned properly, from senior most teachers, then it's simply a fact: people have bad results many times with SK. The Art of Living needs to disclose this with grave warnings before teaching people. Maybe you need to smoke some more weed, dude? 😉 Or maybe hyperventilate some more.

Former practitioner PERMALINK

May 27, 2012 8:44 pm

Sorry to hear this but know you are not alone. It's not just the technique, which definitely is damaging, but also the brain-washing. A common suggestion many medical professionals gave me was to exercise. I also dropped reading anything that was too close to AoL stuff, including scriptures. Even listening to mantras. At least until I started gaining "brain muscle and stamina". I obviously stopped all practices, and still today, even if I try different pranayamas, I feel a little sick. I started reading articles that had to do with "the real world, could be even The Economist, for example, or even a novel written by an author I liked, without pressuring myself to understand anything or read just too many pages at a time. Slowly slowly, it started improving. It's been several years and I still struggle but I am doing much better! (I was an A student with perfect visual memory and I had reached a point I was even dyslexic!). It's the price we pay for having given our power to a sociopathic lunatic with absolutely no knowledge of what he "teaches". Also what helped me A LOT was to introduce meat to my diet. I know this could be a problem if you belong to a religion that does not allow it, but if not, really, this was and still is quite effective, and it has not affected my prana AT ALL. Well, good luck!

Dayalu PERMALINK

January 29, 2011 3:41 pm

Yoga,

The official statistics of AOL says that only 10% of the people who do the course continue the kriya for more than a year. Assume these are the people who find the kriya beneficial at least in the beginning. As an ex teacher I can vouch that among these 10% some of them drop out later due to multiple reason including kriya leading to health problems. So the so called 'people who practice kriya for years' are a tiny fraction of the so called millions who do the course. If an objective study is done, you can find ten times 'the lots and lots of people' who stopped doing kriya either because they didn't find it a big deal or because their health deteriorated.

Yoga PERMALINK

January 29, 2011 9:21 pm

Dayalu,

I know that even 10% is a higher number. I can only share with you what I observed. Most people don't practice daily...main reason is "No time". Personally, I have no had any issues with SK. There is no doubt that it has helped me a lot. btw, if you take any physical activity like walking or running or Gym or Yoga activity for that matter, less than 10% do it on a consistent basis.

WIDE AWAKE PERMALINK

February 8, 2011 7:35 pm

"I know that even 10% is a higher number".

Yeah, thats true.
Even if 50% of this 10% suffer health problems due to sk , that would be a big number too. This clearly means that the technique is NOT FOR ALL.
Is aol / THE compassionate Guru not RESPONSIBLE for ruining others health at every level of their existance?

#2.24

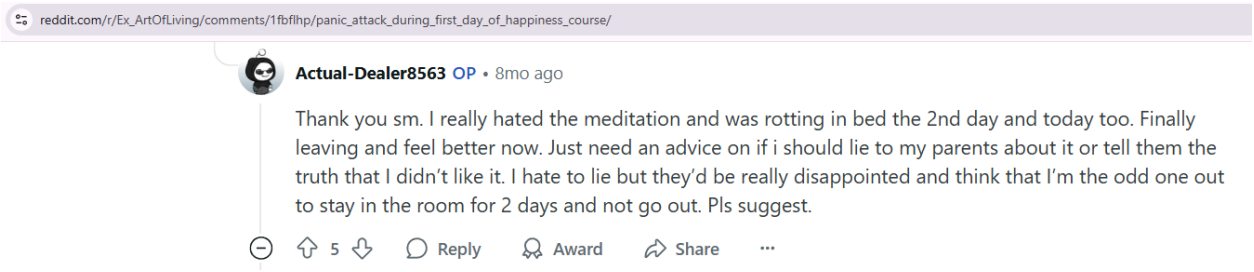
freeagaiin PERMALINK

February 26, 2011 12:11 am

As i went through the process of leaving AOL, i wasn't that angry, but now i really am. Its the fact that we have all had a similar experience and have decided to speak up, because there was actually no avenue within AOL to actually speak out and be taken seriously. And here we are creating our own space to speak, to interact, and to decide how we want to move forward (with most seeking to make a change and ideally prevent others from spending unnecessary sums of money, and preventing abuse of any kind) and here we have AOL'ers who in the first instance would not even spend five minutes to listen to someone who was facing these thing, come here in our space and put people down.

Enough is enough!! My experience was horrendous by my terms. And i still feel harassed by AOl'ers who have no respect for my choice to leave and continue to spam me.

#2.25


reddit.com/r/Ex_ArtOfLiving/comments/1fbflhp/panic_attack_during_first_day_of_happiness_course/
Actual-Dealer8563 OP • 8mo ago
Thank you sm. I really hated the meditation and was rotting in bed the 2nd day and today too. Finally leaving and feel better now. Just need an advice on if i should lie to my parents about it or tell them the truth that I didn't like it. I hate to lie but they'd be really disappointed and think that I'm the odd one out to stay in the room for 2 days and not go out. Pls suggest.
5
Reply
Award
Share

#2.26

AndySriSri • 1d ago

Thanks. My intent is to help and also find help. I had been (and also now) going through similar situation and took 2.5 years to stabilize and get myself out of AOL and stay at arms length from any spiritual advice.

I was with AOL for 20+ years and had done 15+ part two courses. I did back to back part 2 courses and ended up with a heavy head, anxiety, uncontrolled anger symptoms etc. Every time I do Kriya or mediation or even yoga nidra, I end up with heavy head, anxiety, uncontrollable anger. I had floaters in my both eyes.

I was prescribed CST sessions, ayurvedic treatments from Senior AOL teachers. This went on for 2 years and I was in total belief that the teachers were right. My symptoms went bad to worse and soon I had to consult Senior Neurologists. I went through MRI's and CT Scans. I had to consult to couple of senior ophthalmologists. I was diagnosed with Chronic Migraine and been put on anti depressants and beta blockers. They could not find anything wrong with me physically.

#2.27

Roopali PERMALINK

October 1, 2010 5:41 am

I completely agree with your post based on my experience. I did the Long kriya for the first two days and I started getting headaches and felt dizzy. I told this to my teacher Chayapathi (Swami Suryapada) and he said it is good sign of purification. He told me to do pranayama and short kriya for 40 days, long kriya on sundays and do not stop in between. I did this and throughout this period I had problems like dizziness, heart palpitation, eye pain and nervousness . When i told this to aol teachers they checked with me on the kriya rhythms in the long kriya and said I am doing all the rhythms just fine. After forty days I continued for some more months on pranayama and short kriya but my health and mental state only worsened. Chayapathi also suggested silent meditation and Sahaj. That helped a bit but still there was discomfort. I did not realize that the main culprit here was the sudarshan kriya.

It is thanks to divine grace that I met the yoga master Shrishachandra Vasu in bangalore. He told me that I should not be doing the kriya and it will cause long term harm if I continue this further. He prescribed to me a set of gentle yoga exercise, ujjayi breathing without retention, humming breath, alternate nostril breathing and silent meditation. Within the first few days of this practice, I could see a well being, peace abd bliss. I have continued on this practise with guidance from my yoga teacher and I have never felt better. I have got things which AOL advertises but never delivered to me. A smile from the bottom of my heart.

I agree that AOL teachings can be helpful for some people but for most people like me it has been dangerous. Had I listened to the aol teachers and continued I would have become a physical and mental wreck. I think it is important that people should be cautioned against some of the bad aspects of these practices as it can lead to harm. Yoga is a gentle art and it requires sensitivity to teach and learn. Just breathing like mad people is not yoga. It can be sensational to attract people but it will only harm them in the long run.

#2.28

kk PERMALINK

May 18, 2012 12:23 pm

Hi All, I did Sudarshan kriya, some times and decided to stop as I found the technique is not natural(breathing fast and slow) and harmful to my body. I suffered from head aches, sleeplessness, confusion and irritation. I have been practising martial arts for 2.5 years and I never had such bad experiences. I would say, take care when you interefering with your breath and don't simply listen to AOL teachers. Use your brain! This is a big business now-a-days. Supporting factor: almost 85% people who attended the classess complained about various body related problems and these issues were ignored as 'body is getting rid of toxin'

Kk

Dr Sudheendra PERMALINK

March 4, 2011 7:07 am

What you just mentioned is a clear case of less blood flowing to the brain due to hyper ventilation. You can easily observe all the effects of hyperventilation in practioners of sudarshan kriya. If you do SK and experience numbness or tingling in the hands, feet and lips, lightheadedness, dizziness, headache, chest pain, slurred speech, nervous laughter be well assured that this is due to hyperventilation. It is not the grace of some guru which is creating all this, it is just a plain physical act of overbreathing. You can easily repeat this process in a clinical trail without following any hohums from a guru.

During the AOL course I couldn't help laughing at the stupidity of the AOL teacher who so authoritatively claimed that SK increases oxygen in the system and flushes cells with oxygen. The scientific evidence is contrary to this as it can be easily proven that hyperventilation constricts several blood vesseles which create oxygen starvation.

Almost all people I know including me, who have practised sudarshan kriya have experienced these symptoms. If not for the other traditional measured pranayamas (sectional breathing)taught in AOL, most people would really end up sick if they practised just SK. SK in short is a dangerous technique which even many AOL teachers including Ravishankar do not practise. It is just a initiatory technique into the aol cult for people to get a kick of light headedness. like a drug induced high.You would be better of doing drugs than this as atleast the bad effects of drug abuse can be measured well and rectified. You can get really scarred like many AOLers if you continue hyperventilation for long term.

#2.30

Ankita S · Following
A Devoted Practitioner of Yoga, Pranayama, and Meditation. · 3y

Originally Answered: Why do I vibrate a lot when I practice the Sudarshan Kriya breathing technique?

Few people experience this. Although, a lot of people say that they feel numbness or tingling, or light-headedness when they practice Sudarshan Kriya.

What I'm about to say is my personal opinion and take it just like a grain of salt.

Sudarshan Kriya causes hyperventilation. Now, what is hyperventilation?

Hyperventilation is breathing that is deeper and more rapid than normal. It causes a decrease in the amount of gas in the blood, particularly carbon dioxide.

Today, it's common knowledge that hyperventilation (defined as simply breathing faster or deeper than necessary) can cause dizziness, lightheadedness, numbness in the limbs, and even fainting/loss of consciousness. The reason for these side effects is because, by over-breathing, one is actually depriving oneself of oxygen-- hyperventilation excessively rids the body of carbon dioxide, low carbon dioxide causes blood vessels to constrict, and constricted vessels carry less blood and oxygen to the different parts of the body (including the brain.) This is a condition known as hypoxia, and cells starved of oxygen eventually die.

Few symptoms of hyperventilation include:
Dizziness or lightheadedness.
Shortness of breath.
Belching, bloating, dry mouth.
Weakness, confusion.
Sleep disturbances.
Numbness and tingling in your arms or around your mouth.
Muscle spasms in hands and feet, chest pain, and palpitations.

Teachers and devotees of AOL argue that it is "**controlled hyperventilation**" and therefore not harmful. They might even refer you to the "scientific research" on the kriya that supports its many benefits. Hyperventilation is hyperventilation (no matter how you spin it), and I have gone through a number of the articles on the kriya, most (if not all) of which were published by devotees of SSRS. Most of them (particularly the earlier ones) are lacking in the proper controls, and it is unclear whether subjects are doing the full SK with associated pranayams, or SK alone. I have yet to see a truly unbiased, well-controlled study with convincing data supporting the unsubstantiated claims that SK is the cure-all it is touted to be.

PS: If you feel anything is abnormal, please consult a doctor immediately. It has become very common in India to believe in a Guru more than a Doctor. It will be good if the Guru is genuine like Swami Vivekananda or Ramakrishna Paramahamsa or Ramana Maharshi. Otherwise, you will be digging your own grave without even realizing it.

7.3K views · View 13 upvotes · Answer requested by Kasu Arega 1 of 2 answers

#2.31

hardikchitroda
Bangalore India

1 Review

Rude behavior, indiscipline and zero motivation

★☆☆☆☆ Jun 11, 2012 04:59 PM 16761 Views

I was one of the fools to attend the AOL course. I had already made the registration. Thursday night I went on the counter to take my batch and room keys. Godddd. They made me wait for 20 minutes and what was the person doing. I am standing in front of him and by the time a lady came in and started talking. I thought they were talking about my allocation. But unfortunately they were busy talking about their life. Thereafter I went to the security guard to ask which is the way for the room. That Ass!@#$ took my map, again was made waiting 15 minutes, I thought he was searching for my room in the map, but he wanted to search Gaushala instead of Yagnashala(where I was allocated the room) After 15 minutes he said yagnashala is this only.

I asked why you took so long to guide, he said I was searching for Gaushala, as one lady had inquired(thark_). Instead was helping me out, he wanted to help that lady. Again in the morning we went for the 1st session. They had to say do not expect anything from the course. Why the hell have we come here. 2nd half I started feeling dizziness and gave me severe headache. I went to the room to rest, as I also got temperature. One of the volunteer came in and started arguing why am I sleeping. I told him to give some medication as I am not well. He was least bothered and told to sit in the course whether I get headache or fever. Even I didn't bothered and went of to sleep. After some time again some volunteer came in and asked why I am not in the session. I requested him to get me a medication, as my condition is getting severe.

I left that place on the spot and thank god I made a right decision. I went for the check up and found I have got typhoid. Do not join such courses. Rude behaviour, indisciplined and zero motivation. I found the management rajeev_vermacially the volunteers too cheap.

#2.32

Satya

March 19, 2015 at 6:43 pm

Hii Parth
I did this AOL course in jan first week(2015). Beginning i felt good. It was indeed a good experience and i used to do SK every day it was a strong commitment from my side not to miss it for a single day. But after a few days i started getting too much sleep. Even if i sleep happily for 10 hrs also i used to get too much sleep after bf lunch in the evening and even headache and dizziness. When i asked my teacher he turned out to be a good doctor. He said removal of toxins, Divine is acting in your body :D. I never believed his words. I had been to doctor took medicines and took better care of myself. And in a few days i recovered. Problem with me was that i used to think of SK often as like whether because of doing SK i faced such problems or was that because of some other reasons. You may not believe parth i again attended follow up classes continuosly for 2 weekend(sat), I landed myself again in the same trouble. Now i am 100% sure all these what i faced for 2 months was because of SK. Now even if God tell me that it is good, i will never believe. And also i would like to share one more thing Parth, i also have the experience of doing traditional pranayam yoga. I attended Sidda Samadhi Yoga of Rishi Prabhakar Guruji. They taught us mudra pranayam , Kapalbhati, suka pranayam. Even in SSY they taught us SOHAM meditation. There our teacher also said Soham is a very ancient technique given by Maharishi vishwamitra.Its not something which is discovered my this billionaire shri shri, but unfortunately it is modified, and it is branded by giving a different name and shri shri claims that he has invented it. Traditional pranayam is totally different from this SK. SK is niether Yoga nor it is pranayam. Its a way to attract people. I quarreled with my teacher i told him all my problems and you may not believe parth what he said is: I ve signed the appln form in which its clearly stated " If anything happens we are not responsible". Why is this soo. Clearly Aol teachers are not confident with kriya whether it will bring same positive results for all.

Narasimha

May 10, 2011 at 10:14 am

There are many many negative experiences with SK that are never published. AOL will only publish their marketing material on their website and publications, yet these negative effects have found their way through mainstream media and people are slowly becoming more aware.

I suffered from dizziness and vertigo after starting SK practice. Dr Manikantan and I chatted a bit at Visalakshi Mantap many years ago, I wanted some answers, got nothing. We went to the “vaid” who is the presiding ayurvedic doctor, he proposed some changes and some herbs but nothing helped. If I stopped SK the problems went away, so I finally decided to abandon SK completely.

I cannot have faith in a system if even their senior teachers and doctors can’t diagnose a simple condition and help me out. AOL is a business run by a charismatic leader. Treat it this way, and you will come out all right. Don’t fall for this liberation and enlightened master claptrap.

Reply

Sat

November 12, 2014 at 12:09 pm

I don’t believe people “fall” for it. The supporters of AOL & its techniques must have felt something good about it. I wish it didn’t cause you problems of dizziness & vertigo. The technique may not have suited you and of course you must stop with it.

Reply

#2.34

garvita sethi

August 20, 2012 at 12:47 pm

i agree...completely..
i am suffering from migrain and tuberculoma and when i did this kriya my headache was incresed 10 times :'(

Reply

#2.35

Akki

February 27, 2022 at 9:14 pm

Hi Parth and all here,
Just done with basic course and feeling dizziness and lack of concentration. Not getting what to do...Can you please guide me how to get rid of it and how about you guys what you did and how are you now?

Reply

#2.36

Is it safe to continue art of living happiness program if you feel dizziness after sudarshan kriya continuously for first 2 days?

Answers (7) Sort Recommended

Deepesh Deomurari
Senior Faculty at Art of Living · Author has **2.7K** answers and **8.6M** answer views · 6y

It feels like you are not doing proper rest after kriya. Generally what happens when you go to beautiful meditative state; then you need to come out slowly. Its applicable for all meditations. Many times - I feel like - I am not fully aware about surrounding then I keep my eyes closed and after sometime, I feel okay.

However, you can also talk to happiness course teacher.

Upvote · 1

stupid seeker PERMALINK

May 11, 2011 3:16 pm

My mum suffered a cerebral stroke last year, March. The doctors diagnosed her to be severely diabetic at the time of the stroke . She had to be hospitalized for almost a month, but thanks to the care provided by the hospital she pulled through. She is currently on insulin therapy and other antidiabetic/antihypertensive medication and is currently stable.

People were a little surprised why something like this could happen to someone who was into AOL big time. Over almost 15 years of association with AOL she had given HHSS Ravi Shankar a place among the various Gods and Godessess in her puja room. She had also done almost all the courses offered by AOL one after the another, including three advanced courses in outstation places, the sahaj samadhi meditation course, the padma sadhana course and some others. A very active member of the AOL and a regular practioner of the SKY.

While not commenting upon the efficacy, or the lack of it, of the SKY, it is clear to me now that the medications she once looked down upon are irreplaceable and are her life support. And whats more, we can get tangible answers to questions regarding, adverse effects, efficacy and so forth of the medications and the treatment/ dietary regimens.The medical doctors do know a bit about these things though they may not be quite so knowledgeable about things like “healing using the consciousness”.

Interestingly, In an interview with Shobha De, HHSS Ravi Shankarji says, India needs fewer hospitals, because only then people will learn to live life healthily. Somehow the link between fewer hospitals and people living a healthier life escaped me, unless HHSS Ravi Shankarji had an alternate healthcare system in mind. His sister Bhanu didi then goes on to say that some people have reported SKY to be a definite cure for asthma.

Quite an achievement one might say considering that pharma guys even after years of research and tonnes of investment have yet to do that for a common cold much less asthma or even Cancer and AIDS. Pls. find the link to the interview below for your interest

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oRfa7nCoqXs

Upward SELF · Feb 28

This is so dangerous to tell people. This is a prime example of the tactics being used. To tell people that they should suffer and keep doing the kriya even though it doesn't resonate in the body is dangerous. This breathwork has so many contraindications, and for people that have any kind of PTSD or Anxiety, heart issues, strokes, mental illness should absolutely consult a Dr and they may want to research the pranayama this organization patented by calling it a kriya. It's a pranayama and a potent one.

I was pressured exactly like this by one of my friends, while I was at the art of living, and this is disturbing how you put this hertz telling your story of sitting with the breathwork for a long period of time through the suffering is almost like that's what they teach you to tell people that the breath work doesn't resonate for.

This is really dangerous.

#2.38

Kshanit Shankardas · 5y

I had similar side effects of Sudarshan Kriya. Later I was hospitalized for Brain Stroke.

#2.39

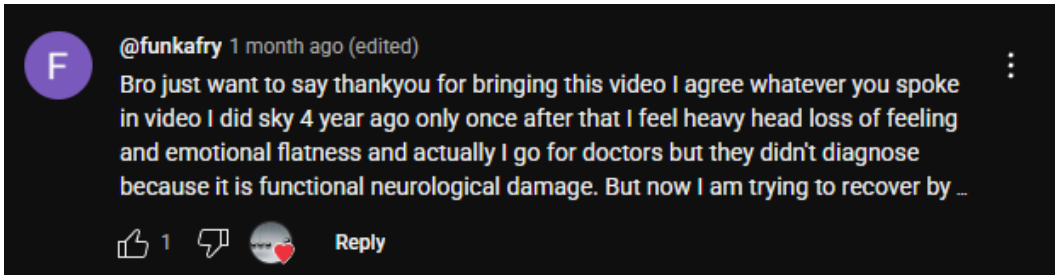
AndySriSri • 1d ago

Thanks. My intent is to help and also find help. I had been (and also now) going through similar situation and took 2.5 years to stabilize and get myself out of AOL and stay at arms length from any spiritual advice.

I was with AOL for 20+ years and had done 15+ part two courses. I did back to back part 2 courses and ended up with a heavy head, anxiety, uncontrolled anger symptoms etc. Every time I do Kriya or mediation or even yoga nidra, I end up with heavy head, anxiety, uncontrollable anger. I had floaters in my both eyes.

I was prescribed CST sessions, ayurvedic treatments from Senior AOL teachers. This went on for 2 years and I was in total belief that the teachers were right. My symptoms went bad to worse and soon I had to consult Senior Neurologists. I went through MRI's and CT Scans. I had to consult to couple of senior ophthalmologists. I was diagnosed with Chronic Migraine and been put on anti depressants and beta blockers. They could not find anything wrong with me physically.

#2.40


F
@funkafry 1 month ago (edited)
Bro just want to say thankyou for bringing this video I agree whatever you spoke in video I did sky 4 year ago only once after that I feel heavy head loss of feeling and emotional flatness and actually I go for doctors but they didn't diagnose because it is functional neurological damage. But now I am trying to recover by ...
1
Reply

"Neuro-physiological responses remind us that the bridge between breath and nerve is delicate. Awareness, gradual pacing, and informed teaching transform risk into resilience."

Reported Adverse Effects Domain 3- Respiratory & Pulmonary Health

SUMMARY OF ADVERSE REACTIONS AND SIDE EFFECTS

ACTUAL LIST OF ADVERSE SYMPTOMS REPORTED IN ONLINE REVIEWS AND COMMENTS:
BREATHING TROUBLE, ASTHMA, COPD, ALLERGY

NUMBER OF CASES REPORTED:
AT LEAST 4 FOUND ON INTERNET. THERE ARE MORE SUSPECTED TO BE OFFLINE OR UNREPORTED ON INTERNET

INSTANCES OF ADVERSE REACTIONS AND SIDE EFFECTS REPORTED ONLINE

#3.1

anonymous PERMALINK
December 10, 2010 4:02 pm

OASCS: Be careful with the water — the original "water cure" man died, not long ago of, guess what, kidney failure! Too much water is really bad for your kidneys. 2-3 liters, unless you are living in hot sun, working outside, sweating all the time, is waaaaayyyy too much over time.

I did the kriya for several years. I also taught. I developed allergies which I never had, to dust, mites, pollen. I began getting bronchitis very often, and even had pneumonia twice (when I was teaching)! I no longer do the long Kriya, and rarely do even the short one at home because of my lung difficulties that came from the practice. If I get a cold, it immediately goes to my lungs. I've seen a pulmonary specialist as a result (I'm way too young for all this junk to be happening, btw) and he tested me and said "you have lungs 15-20 years beyond your age...." and showed me all sorts of awful looking stuff on my xray. I know my lungs were normal before because I had a mandatory health physical for work before learning the Kriya, and was told I was in excellent health. It included a chest xray. I have a cough that never goes away, now, and sounds deep and hollow. The doctor has recommended an inhaler, and stated that I have asthma (didn't have it before the Kriya). So go figure. I think Kriya is bad for health, especially if one is a teacher and does more long Kriyas.

This is my experience, and that of others I know as well. Perhaps Kriya is better suited to people who live in pristine mountain air and not in towns, villages or cities where the air might not be as good? That's my guess. Also, the overworking of the lungs appears to hurt many people.

Good for yogis in the mountains. Not so good for regular folks like me and others.

anonymous PERMALINK

May 11, 2011 3:50 pm

Sorry to hear about your mother, and hope that she recovers well and lives a good life. SSRS is notorious for giving personal, wrong medical advice. He has many times privately advised people I know, and myself, to not go to a doctor, to do more practices, even that a 'cure' was in the works due to affiliation with him. I developed asthma only after some years of SK practice and association with SSRS. Also allergies. He even bragged that an illness I had was because of him, and because I had spoken back to him, and disobeyed him (!) when in fact, it was simply an untreated internal illness which should have been treated by doctors earlier, the very doctors he advised against. I feel badly for your mother and all others who suffer needlessly from all the misinformation given by Art of Living and SSRS. People get sick and need medical attention. Professional medical attention. They should not be told to just take herbs or meditate or pray or breathe when more intensive therapies are needed. Nobody likes to question when they are in Art of Living. If they do question, they either leave, or are put down or called 'schizophrenic' or 'blue star' or 'crazy' or 'not sufficiently devoted'. Whatever. I left and got a life. I realized that Art of Living was not a life. It is a mental hospital filled with patients, and I just didn't feel sufficiently crazy to stay. 🙄 I hope that all involved in AOL go out and get a life instead of living Ravi Shankar's agenda.

Anonymous PERMALINK

March 2, 2012 12:04 pm

Here are my observations: 2 people who were in AOL and did the practice regularly, developed asthma they never had before. 1 person reported doing SK and passing out, and said that others with them said they were having some kind of fit, shaking, etc. At least 3 people I can think of have said they had irregular heartbeat during and after the practice of SK and had not had it before. To me, this means that this practice should not be given in large groups without a doctor present, watching carefully. I believe the practice to be "okay" for some people and critically dangerous for many others. Of course people who had the above experiences would either stop SK immediately, or eventually put 2 and 2 together and realize the SK was harming them, and not do it anymore. It's a dangerous practice. I knew at least 4 "senior teachers" who never did SK at all, even when they taught.

Breath practices thrive on moderation. The lungs respond to compassion more than control. May these stories encourage safer tempos and mindful recovery after exertion.

Reported Adverse Effects Domain 4- Cardiovascular Health

SUMMARY OF ADVERSE REACTIONS AND SIDE EFFECTS

ACTUAL LIST OF ADVERSE SYMPTOMS REPORTED IN ONLINE REVIEWS AND COMMENTS:
HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE/HYPERTENSION, HEART PALPITATIONS, TACHYCARDIA/HIGH HEART RATE, HEART ATTACK

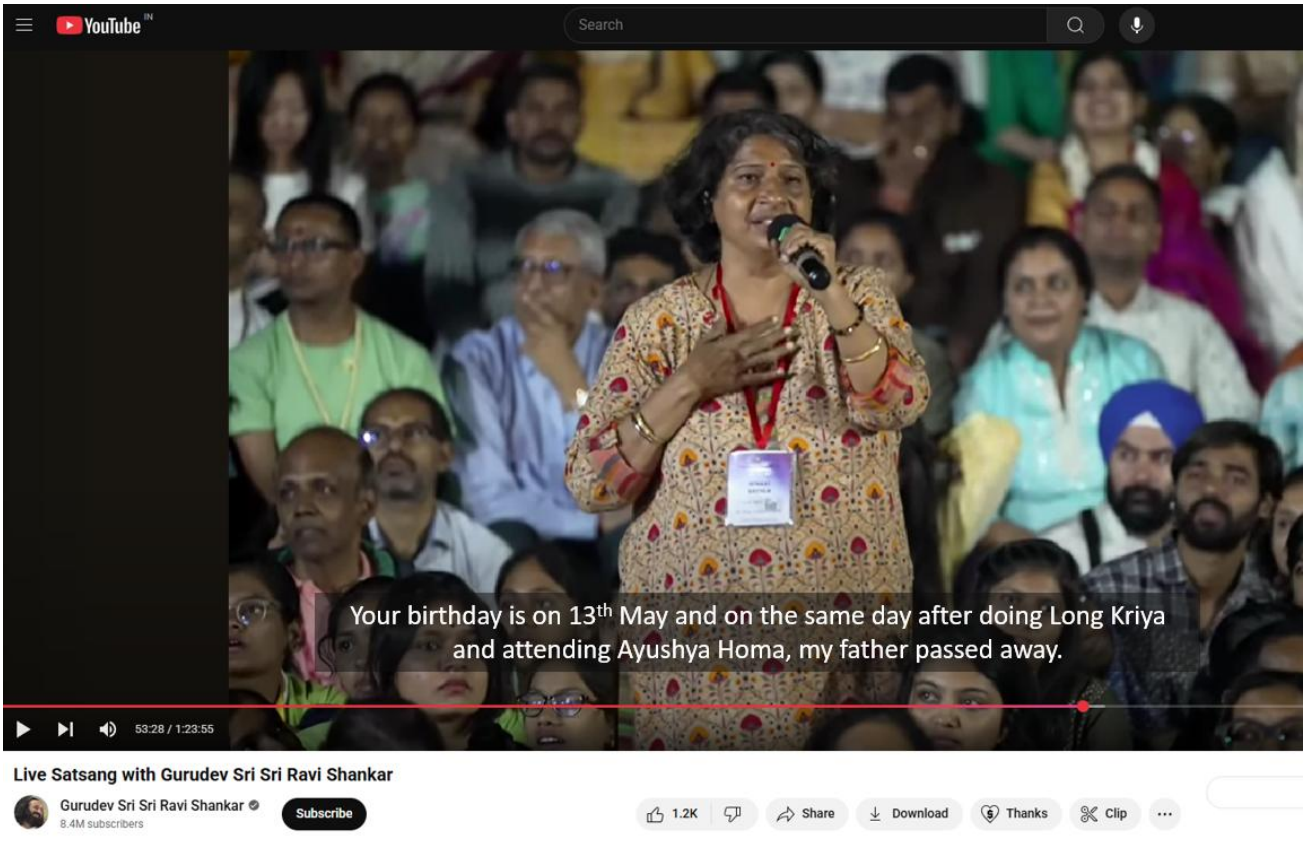
NUMBER OF CASES REPORTED:
AT LEAST 40 FOUND ON INTERNET. THERE ARE MORE SUSPECTED TO BE OFFLINE OR UNREPORTED ON INTERNET

INSTANCES OF ADVERSE REACTIONS AND SIDE EFFECTS REPORTED ONLINE

#4.1

Shankar Shankar · Following
2y
Sudarshan kriya ruined my life for 2 years. I had severe palpitations and loss of sleep after this kriya. I recovered slowly after stopping this. Please dont do this.
Upvote · 1
1
Sudarshana Kriya ruined my life for 2 years. I had severe palpitations and loss of sleep after Sudarshan Kriya. After stopping it, I recovered slowly. What should I do?

#4.2



#4.3

@psycho9153 2 years ago

I am the one who went directly to the ashram and did sudarshankriya
....the feeling of burning gunpowder after doing this sudarshan kriya.....the body will freeze and the eyes will be dark.....I have seen someone who had a heart attack due to the intensity of this experience after opening his eyes while doing sudarshan kriya...

See original (Translated by Google)

54 Reply

34 replies

@psycho9153 2 years ago

The person was saved by reaching the hospital on time

See original (Translated by Google)

#4.4

Saurabh *says:*

December 6, 2011 at 2:59 pm

Hello .. I think Nadi Shodhana was part of the DSN program of the Art of Living since 1996, it was taught along with a practice of a set of asanas, and the whole sequence is called the Padma Sadhana. Also before beginning the poojas SSRS and the people always do Nadi Shodhana pranayaams. Even in the basic course some teachers teach the technique, since quite some time back. I am not an art of living supporter but any way I would not like to discredit them for something for which they are not at fault. They might be at fault for not teaching the nadi shodhana from the very start but they are not at all guilty for not teaching the nadi shodhana at all. As per my information Nadi shodhana had always been taught at follow ups, satsangs etc after the basic course right from the very beginning of aol.

I am not a supporter of AoL as I myself have suffered a lot of negative affects from Sudarshan Kriya(9 years almost regular practice), such as loss of calculating power, high blood pressure, loss of hair etc. I have benefited after leaving the practice and focusing on only doing Asanas, and avoiding any sort of heavy breathing at all.

Reply

#4.5

N

@ne3052 4 weeks ago

Like 53:20 even I had a relative who passed away on the same day after doing Long Kriya. 😢

Reply

#4.6

15/https://aolfree.wordpress.com/2012/05/28/a-deeply-disturbing-story/

Landmark PERMALINK

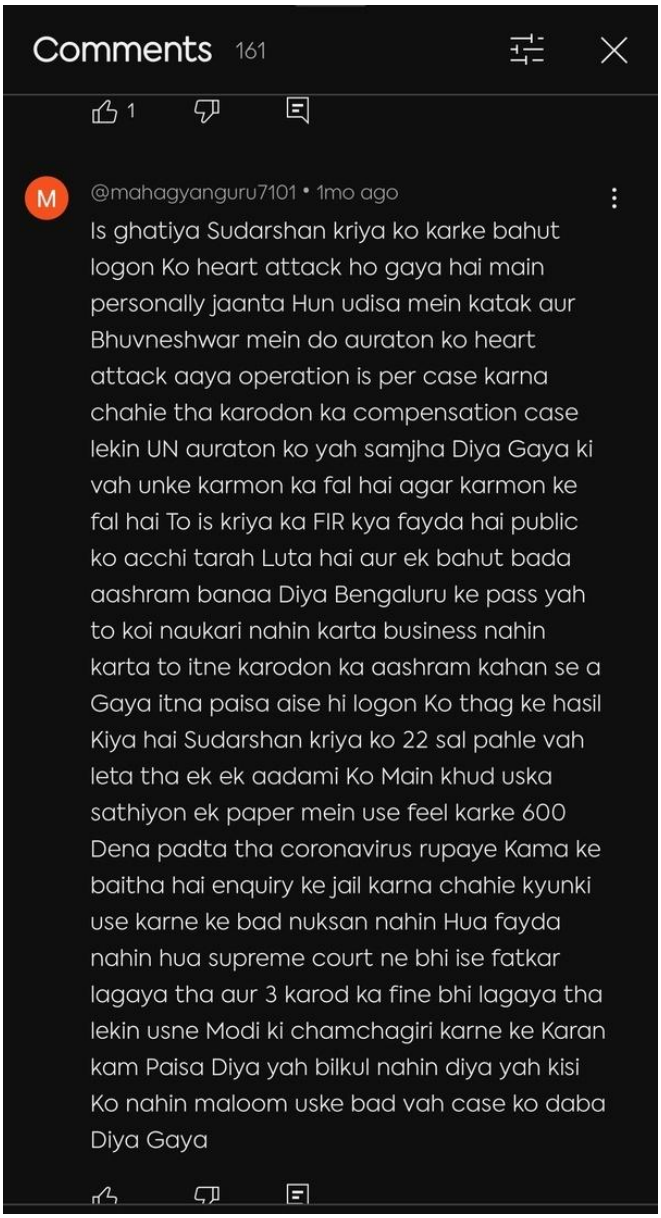
May 29, 2012 8:32 am

Of course, you would have never heard of any such stories. It would not be good marketing to come out and recognize students have gone to sick or psychotic during or after taking their courses, right? Pragyapad used his asthma as a sales item: he also got "cured" of it with the practice of SK ..... well, was it the SK? or the pranayamas that are known yogic practices that were not invented by RS? or was it just, he got cured because neither of one or the other, he just did? And then, OK, suppodely he got cured of asthma .... well, he just suffered of a serious heart attack at the age of 38/39 .... and it is a very small % of people who take the course who actually continue with the practice and/or the group ... many of the sad stories are not allowed to be made public, and if they are, they are labeled as "dissidents asking for $3,000", "blue stars", "bipolars", "negative energy", "bad karma", "difamation". Why don't you start by asking that question? If there was nothing to hide, then why do they work so hard, spend so much money to hide so much??? Many teachers and volunteers are genuine in their intention, but they are just too brainwashed, and in most cases, great actors who fight for their guru (and their mental health ..... recognizing your guru is a sociopath, and your spiritual path, the business of a conman, is a very very harsh reality to face).

#4.7, #4.8

@mahagyanguru7101 1 year ago

He is the only man who says so
Bahut logon Ko Sudarshan kriya se bahut nuksan hua
Kai logon Ko heart attack Ho Gaya Kai logon ka hath ki surgery Hui Kai logon ka BP aur sadharan badh gaya agar vah log is per case karte to ise jail ho jata iska Naseeb achcha hai bahar pravachan kar raha hai


Comments 161
1
@mahagyanguru7101 • 1mo ago
Is ghatiya Sudarshan kriya ko karke bahut logon Ko heart attack ho gaya hai main personally jaanta Hun udisa mein katak aur Bhuvneshwar mein do auraton ko heart attack aaya operation is per case karna chahie tha karodon ka compensation case lekin UN auraton ko yah samjha Diya Gaya ki vah unke karmon ka fal hai agar karmon ke fal hai To is kriya ka FIR kya fayda hai public ko acchi tarah Luta hai aur ek bahut bada aashram banaa Diya Bengaluru ke pass yah to koi naukari nahin karta business nahin karta to itne karodon ka aashram kahan se a Gaya itna paisa aise hi logon Ko thag ke hasil Kiya hai Sudarshan kriya ko 22 sal pahle vah leta tha ek ek aadami Ko Main khud uska sathiyon ek paper mein use feel karke 600 Dena padta tha coronavirus rupaye Kama ke baitha hai enquiry ke jail karna chahie kyunki use karne ke bad nuksan nahin Hua fayda nahin hua supreme court ne bhi ise fatkar lagaya tha aur 3 karod ka fine bhi lagaya tha lekin usne Modi ki chamchagiri karne ke Karan kam Paisa Diya yah bilkul nahin diya yah kisi Ko nahin maloom uske bad vah case ko daba Diya Gaya

> *Translated comment:* "Sudarshan Kriya has reportedly led to heart attacks in several individuals. I personally know of at least two women from Odisha—specifically Cuttack and Bhubaneswar—who suffered heart attacks and had to undergo surgery. Instead of receiving compensation, they were told it was a result of their karma. It appears that The Art of Living organization is more focused on business and profit-making than on the well-being of its participants."

#4.9

Original Anonymous PERMALINK

July 28, 2011 4:44 pm

I agree. I have seen many people doing the Kriya very vigorously, and over doing the practices such as Padma Sadhana. I too used to over do some of the practices especially the heavy breathing (i started doing a lot of Kapalbhaatis from Sri Sri Yoga along with the Padmasadhana and the Kriya) and hence started having High Blood Pressure and Hyper tension. But I think it was because i over did the Sadhana.

Jr. PERMALINK

July 28, 2011 8:02 pm

People can also practice it very gently and correctly and still have major health problems because of it. Just because someone is having health problems from the breathing does not mean they are doing the practices wrong.

#4.10

Experience of a teacher from **THE ART OF LIVING FOUNDATION**
who had heart attack in Vishalakshi Mantap

Mujhe heart attack aaya

Sattva talks

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U-4b2hs_04

The Good and Bad of Bhastrika Pranayama

September 28th, 2011

By Faye Martins

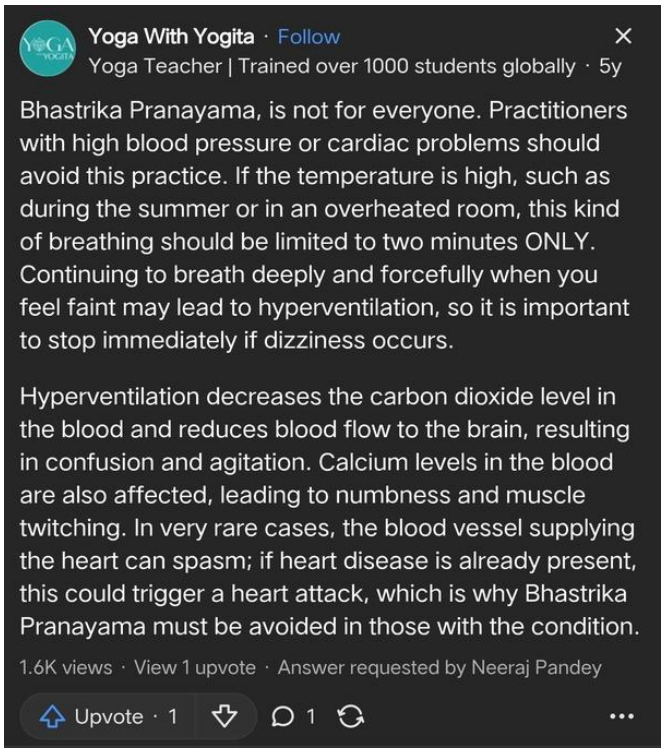
Bhastrika Pranayama literally means "bellows breath": exhaling quickly and forcefully, making a sound like air expelling from a bellows. Performing Bhastrika Pranayama regularly can provide health benefits, but how is it done and are there any contraindications?

When performed correctly, this breathing exercise helps provide the body with maximum oxygen, which makes the skin glow. Other benefits include reducing toxins in the body, increasing warmth in the body and strengthening the immune system, and reducing respiratory tract ailments. Blood purification and weight loss are also benefits of "bellows breathing." It is said that this is the secret to ageless skin and beauty!

Hyperventilation decreases the carbon dioxide level in the blood and reduces blood flow to the brain, resulting in confusion and agitation. Calcium levels in the blood are also affected, leading to numbness and muscle twitching. In very rare cases, the blood vessel supplying the heart can spasm; if heart disease is already present, this could trigger a heart attack, which is why Bhastrika Pranayama must be avoided in those with the condition.

As with other asanas and practices in Yoga, it is important to remember that these are powerful tools, to be regarded respectfully. Take seriously any negative signs from your body or your students.

‘Yoga with Yogita’ and ‘aura wellness center’ issues caution on Bhastrika



Yoga With Yogita · Follow
Yoga Teacher | Trained over 1000 students globally · 5y

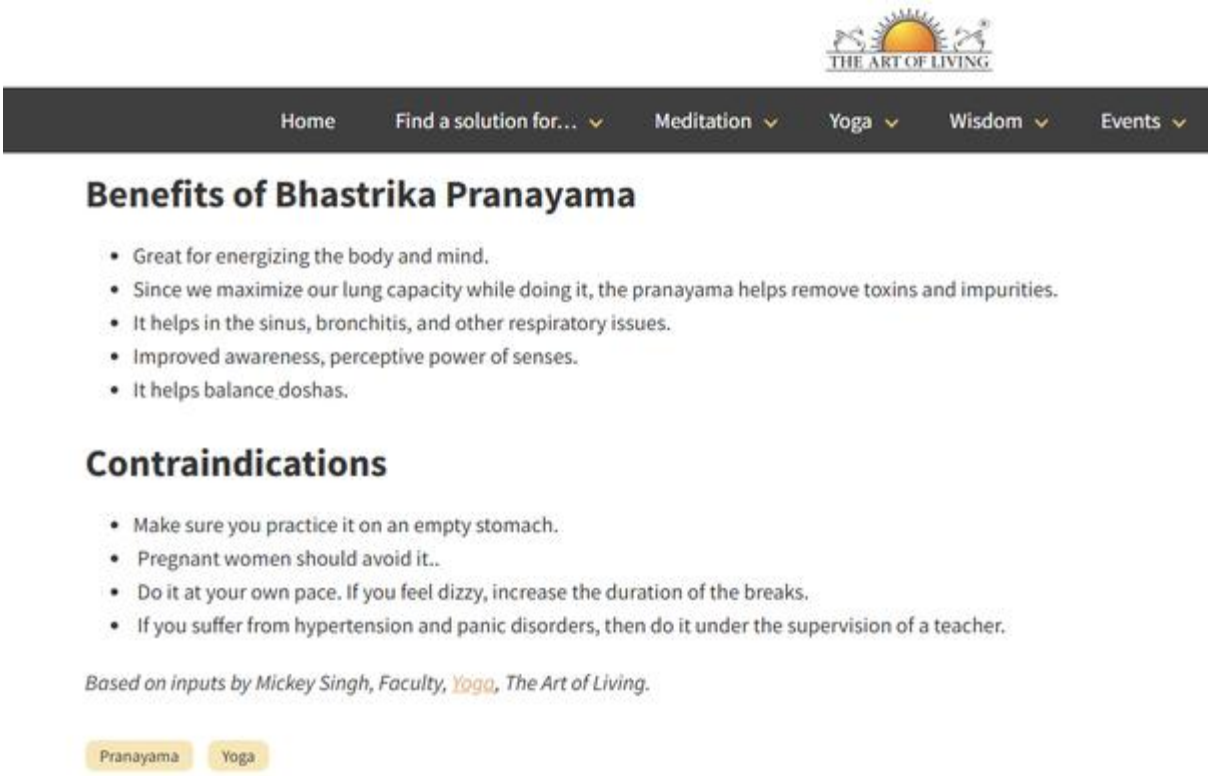
Bhastrika Pranayama, is not for everyone. Practitioners with high blood pressure or cardiac problems should avoid this practice. If the temperature is high, such as during the summer or in an overheated room, this kind of breathing should be limited to two minutes ONLY. Continuing to breath deeply and forcefully when you feel faint may lead to hyperventilation, so it is important to stop immediately if dizziness occurs.

Hyperventilation decreases the carbon dioxide level in the blood and reduces blood flow to the brain, resulting in confusion and agitation. Calcium levels in the blood are also affected, leading to numbness and muscle twitching. In very rare cases, the blood vessel supplying the heart can spasm; if heart disease is already present, this could trigger a heart attack, which is why Bhastrika Pranayama must be avoided in those with the condition.

1.6K views · View 1 upvote · Answer requested by Neeraj Pandey

Upvote · 1 1

This is the information that **THE ART OF LIVING FOUNDATION** publishes on its website for health risks & precautions for practicing Bhastrika Pranayama. Does this list look comprehensive enough? There are so many health risks & precautions that have been missed that can be found by searching on Google.


THE ART OF LIVING
Home
Find a solution for...
Meditation
Yoga
Wisdom
Events
Benefits of Bhastrika Pranayama
Great for energizing the body and mind.
Since we maximize our lung capacity while doing it, the pranayama helps remove toxins and impurities.
It helps in the sinus, bronchitis, and other respiratory issues.
Improved awareness, perceptive power of senses.
It helps balance doshas.
Contraindications
Make sure you practice it on an empty stomach.
Pregnant women should avoid it..
Do it at your own pace. If you feel dizzy, increase the duration of the breaks.
If you suffer from hypertension and panic disorders, then do it under the supervision of a teacher.
Based on inputs by Mickey Singh, Faculty, Yoga, The Art of Living.
Pranayama
Yoga

IMPORTANT TO NOTE: The adverse reactions and side effects have been observed to fade away when the sky practice was stopped

ano PERMALINK
March 26, 2012 12:28 pm

The real question here is how can you ascertain that it is the effect of doing these things only .it can only be said that these kriyas do not cure/stop all disease under all circumstances .

Jr. PERMALINK
March 26, 2012 4:24 pm

"The real question here is how can you ascertain that it is the effect of doing these things only."

It's obvious when your health problems go away after stopping the practice.

#4.11

Sandeep PERMALINK

May 29, 2012 6:33 am

I would like to say about my own experience with SK.I did it after my 12 std exams.After the course I was very much attached to the kriya and SSR.But after some months I experienced some problems including dull feeling,lack of interest in anything,heaviness in the eyes.But still continued because when i asked aol they said it was detoxification.I believed that.after 8-9 months i had palpitations.but still continued.then a time came when i suddenly got angry and had lot of problems like chest pains.I had dumb feeling also.not interested in anything.

Then I went to a kalari master(Kalaripayattu) and learned kalari.With those I overcame these things.I regret doing SK and wasting a part of my life.This is nothing but fooling people.

#4.12

Dr.C.Bharaneetharan MBBS PERMALINK

December 2, 2011 6:34 pm

First of all i want to tel that i respect Sudarsana kriya and art of living. Actually i started getting palpitations after ordinary pranayama. So that i approached art of living and started practising S.K. That time also i got palpitations but with hope i did that kriya for about one and half yr. i didn't get relieved. So i underwent all cardiac investigations and the results all were normal. After that i joined Isha yoga,unfortunately i started getting palpitations again. Then i practised for 6 months and stopped bcoz of more palpitations. I have not been doing any pranayama for 8 months. But still now the palpitation is continuing. My opinion is that certain body types will not tolerate these practises unfortunately. Please give me suggestions to come out of my problem if u had found any solution..

#4.13, 4.14, 4.15

Anonymous PERMALINK

March 2, 2012 12:04 pm

Here are my observations: 2 people who were in AOL and did the practice regularly, developed asthma they never had before. 1 person reported doing SK and passing out, and said that others with them said they were having some kind of fit, shaking, etc. At least 3 people I can think of have said they had irregular heartbeat during and after the practice of SK and had not had it before. To me, this means that this practice should not be given in large groups without a doctor present, watching carefully. I believe the practice to be "okay" for some people and critically dangerous for many others. Of course people who had the above experiences would either stop SK immediately, or eventually put 2 and 2 together and realize the SK was harming them, and not do it anymore. It's a dangerous practice. I knew at least 4 "senior teachers" who never did SK at all, even when they taught.

#4.16

gv PERMALINK

June 27, 2011 5:06 am

I have just read this blog by chance while searching for information regarding palpitations as this is something I suffered from 5 years back. I'm starting pranayam with a teacher now and wanted to be sure that there are no such risks. I was shocked as i read through the posts. I had joined the aol course at the time (5 yrs bk, just before i got this problem) and after 3 months of the SK practice i suffered severe palpitations which took a year to cure. It took 2 years for me to regain my normal life back. Once I had starting making rounds of hospitals i forgot all about kriya so i never did it again but as i look back i wonder now that the 2 were definitely related! I truly wish there was more popularization of the severe adverse effects such so called techniques can have and how they play with lives. Thanks to all those who are untiringly continuing to reply to the posts of a few fanatics (its very evident to a newcomer here like me on who's arguing on the basis of facts and logic and who's not) so that anyone who cares to read or is lucky enough is alerted in time.

Akshata PERMALINK

March 24, 2011 6:17 am

My sincere appeal to people. If you are having problems due to Sudarshan Kriya please stop immediately. it can worsen your condition if you do not heed the warnings and continue. This practise not suitable for all. It took me almost six months to recover from my three month practise of kriya. I did not have a heart attack as some one was mentioning before. but very strong heart palpitations due to kriya. the doctors warned me that I might even get some of the heart valves damaged.

Be very careful when you practise hotch potch techniques like sudarshan kriya. The teachers themselves do not know how this sudarshan kriya works or do not work. Ask questions to them and do not take their silly answers like guru's revelation or grace. Otherwise you will suffer like how i suffered.

Thanks to real yoga masters who helped me come out of this dangerous cult practise.

Akshata PERMALINK

March 26, 2011 7:40 am

Harshal,

The heart palpitations started a week after I started doing the sudarshan kriya and unfortunately I never thought it was due to this practice and continued this practice. I never had any pre-existing conditions and being 24 years of age I have always been in good health. I later came to know that it was a direct result of doing this so called wonderful technique. The aol teacher had no clue about this always spoke some rubbish about cleansing and grace and negativity.

After three months of practice my health only worsened and became eractic. One day I fainted at work and was adviced bed rest. When I went through the treadmill/ECG my heart condition did not show any abnormality. The doctor who was very perceptive asked me about my work and other activities. When I told him about all and even the breathing practice that I do, he suggested maybe I should rethink and stop doing it. It was at that time I realized the actual causal relationship between sudarshan kriya and the heart palpitations. Whenever I stopped this practice for a couple of days the palpitations and discomfort in the heart area reduced.

Akshata PERMALINK

March 26, 2011 7:40 am

I fortunately met some very good yoga teachers from the Bihar school of Yoga who made me understand the dangers of practicising improper Pranayama like how they teach in AOL. I was provided a tailored yoga sadhana routine which made me come back to normal and back in to good health. I was able to clearly see how my body got abused due to the AOL pranayama and kriya practice. And the other thing I clearly saw was how the AOL teachers were clueless, insenstive and even subtly abusive towards any one who do not corroborate their false claims of the benefits. I was also surprised to find in internet blogs that anyone who questions AOL gets abused by AOL trolls like yourself. When I first encountered this blog a few days ago I felt that I should share my experience in this post that more people become aware of these dangerous and help them deal with the suffering which can come to them due to AOL as it happened in my case.

Akshata PERMALINK

March 28, 2011 5:55 am

The doctor I consulted is one of the most reputed cardiologist in Bangalore. Let me give more details on what transpired. Due to the heart paltitations and my erratic pulse, he asked me to undergo an ECG (the treadmill test). He had suggested to my father that there might be a possibility of a heart blockage and this can be found from the ECG and a subsequent angiogram. Fortunately the ECG was found normal and the fears of any blocks was ruled out and there was no need for an angio. But anlayzing further on the cause of the palpitations, he went into my lifestyle and practices. When I spoke about the Sudarshan kriya and explained the technique to him, he mentioned that it might be the cause as it involves rigourous breathing and hyperventilation. He mentioned very clearly that such practices continued for a long time can damage the heart valves. I felt that there is truth in what the doctor is saying and for the first time I started questioning the practice which I at that time held in great esteem. I stopped the practice for a few days and suddenly I could see the heart palpitations decrease. My pulse and blood pressure also normalized.

When I told this to the AOL teacher he made me into some kind of a villan and started mocking me. Any sensible person would atleast listen to the actual facts of the case and try to see if there is anything wrong with the Sudarshan Kriya technique. If you look at some facts and exceptions it is possible that you can atleast refine the technique. Maybe sincere wish is that Ravishankar and his teachers look into this and try to see that people do not get harmed. Although, I am appaled at the responses from fanatics like Harshal, it is not something new as I have already experienced such hooligan behaviour from the AOL teachers. Maybe it is their cult indoctrination which make them insensitive and just blind like ostriches.

But like an ostrich the AOL teacher shut his eyes.

#4.18, 4.19

Dayalu PERMALINK

March 28, 2011 3:07 am

Akshata's is not an isolated case. I know a case where the patient had to be admitted to the ICU just a couple of months after doing part -I course. I know cases where people developed hypertension due to SK and they were back to normal after they stopped. And I know AOL knows about numerous such cases which they routinely brush under the carpets. I remember having a conversation with Dr Vinoda Kochupillai of AIIMS, one of the primary researchers who published papers on SK and its benefits. She admitted to me, a few years ago, during a TRM that she had observed the practice of SK leading to hypertension in many patients. But AOLers are all non-idiotic, intelligent, divine souls like Harshal, whose minds reside on an astral plane, different from that of simple, idiotic, worldly folks like us.

#4.20

Sarbeswar PERMALINK

April 18, 2012 1:30 pm

I have undergone AVR (Aortic Valve Replacement) surgery 6 years back. Recently I did a session of SK(Long Kriya and followed by short kriya) . The experience was great. I felt relaxed and light. I feel that SK is a gift to the mankind by SSRS. Having said that, I would also like to mention that I felt pain in my chest and also palpitation after the SK. So I stopped the kriya for a couple of days. Again when I tried the SK, I felt the same discomfort. The teachers advised me that may be I should not have done the BHASTRIKA AND UJJAI PRANAYAMS preceded by the main Kriya. But I can not take a chance , as I have alreday undergone open heart surgery. I need to take proper medical advice from my cardiologist on my next appointment with him. But can anybody(qualified cardiologist and who has practiced SK before) advise me propoerly on this, through this blog. I shall be really obliged to him , because I do not want to be deprived of this great gift of Gurudev to the mankind, at the same time I can not take a risk. I do not doubt the efficacies of the SK. But for me whether it is advisible with some kind of restraints?
Sarbeswar, Bhubaneswar.

#4.21

Dayalu PERMALINK

April 18, 2012 3:33 pm

Sarbeswar,

It will be very hard for you to find a cardiologist who knows the answer to your question, because there have hardly been any conclusive independent study on the health effects of SK. Most of the studies out there are done by Sri Sri devotees and these have only preliminary findings. One neutral person who had done long term research is Dr Janaki Ramaiah of NIMHANS and he is still a skeptic and does not recommend the practice. Dr Vinoda Kochupillai from AIIMS had admitted to me that she had observed cases of hypertension after the start of the practice of SK in many patients.

Bottomline, be extremely cautious when you practise this, as there have been many cases where SK has harmed people's healths. And remember, it is only a feel good technique that AOL has created a hype around. it is not part of any of the established traditions of yoga.

#4.22

Jr. PERMALINK

April 18, 2012 4:33 pm

Sabeswar,

It's not uncommon for people to experience chest pain from Sudarshan Kriya. Listen to your body, not what anyone else says. If anything in life is causing you chest pain, I hope that you would realize your body is telling "this is harming my health." Sudarshan Kriya causes numerous health problems for many people.

#4.23

Observer Jr. PERMALINK

March 29, 2011 1:08 pm

Welcome.

You'll find more than just a few people here have had major problems with kriya, myself included. I practiced it fairly regularly for 8 years. I was in great health, but I began seeing problems after 4 years, and grew worse after that. All my issues healed after a few months of stopping kriya. It was proof to me that the practice was dangerous.

Is it dangerous for all? Probably not. Some appear to have good experiences, including yourself. Not everyone can follow the same diet, and not everyone can do the same practices.

If you continue to practice, just monitor your health very carefully. Watch for signs like eyes getting dark circles. allergy issues may come from nowhere, blood pressure or pulse problems are possible, energy level may reduce significantly, critical thinking or desire for life may disappear... these are all very possible when practicing kriya for the long term.

#4.24

Dev D PERMALINK

May 12, 2011 5:37 am

It is quite possible that SK causes premature deaths in some. But more research is needed to confirm the same. One of my cousin died of a heart attack at 34. He was practising sudarshan kriya for 6 years. But their can be other causes as well. He had a family history of cholestrol and heart problems.

anonymous PERMALINK

March 29, 2011 2:23 pm

Actually, HHSSRS told me himself that someone (who will go unnamed here for fear of lawsuit) did die during the course, when HHSSRS was present. He told me that he brought this person back to life, and that the person is eternally grateful. He said that this person died of heart failure during the SK. Also, once when I was participating in a "Maha" Kriya, a man in the group lost consciousness. I opened my eyes to see many people hovering over this man, including HHSSRS, and the man was brought to another part of the room. Afterwards, again, HHSSRS told me personally that the man had died of heart attack, and because he, HHSSRS was present, he was alive, as he revived him. Otherwise, he told me, the man would have stayed dead.

You can believe this or not, Harshal, and that's just tough. There were lots of people at that occasion, and the first story has been told to many AOL teachers who shared the same thing with me as well. At least these two cases were claimed to be deaths by the "master" himself, and he claimed to have brought them back from death itself.

#4.27

Anonymous PERMALINK

June 12, 2012 5:36 am

In the blessing course i did under swami pragyapad, a lady turned violent after the 'roaring like a lion' process. She became so violent that she tore of the cushion that we use to sit in the vishalakshi mantap and the cotton was flying all over. I could not understand how one can tore a thick cushion with bare hands. She appeared as aggressive as a lion, shouting tearing. Later she regained her senses after a spell of unconsciouness. Then pragyapad had sent her out of the course, telling that she hid that much anger inside her. The lady pleaded him to allow her to continue with the course. But he refused.

I know of another incident where a person died while doing 'om shake' during an advance course with dinesh.

#4.28

Anonymous PERMALINK

June 12, 2012 3:30 pm

@ Anon june 12 2012 5:36 am — "I know of another incident where a person died while doing 'om shake' during an advance course with dinesh"

This does not surprise me. I've seen people fall unconscious, and turn blue. Ravi Shankar himself brags that one of his senior teachers (now left from AOL, good for him) died during the SK, and that he, RS, brought him back to life.

It's a matter of time before someone sues big time and this whole things crumbles.

Roopali PERMALINK

October 1, 2010 5:41 am

ractioner,
I completely agree with your post based on my experience. I did the Long kriya for the first two days and I started getting headaches and felt dizzy. I told this to my teacher Chayapathi (Swami Suryapada) and he said it is good sign of purification. He told me to do pranayama and short kriya for 40 days, long kriya on sundays and do not stop in between. I did this and throughout this period I had problems like dizziness, heart palpitation, eye pain and nervousness . When i told this to aol teachers they checked with me on the kriya rhythms in the long kriya and said I am doing all the rhythms just fine. After forty days I continued for some more months on pranayama and short kriya but my health and mental state only worsened. Chayapathi also suggested silent meditation and Sahaj. That helped a bit but still there was discomfort. I did not realize that the main culprit here was the sudarshan kriya.
It is thanks to divine grace that I met the yoga master Shrishachandra Vasu in bangalore. He told me that I should not be doing the kriya and it will cause long term harm if I continue this further. He prescribed to me a set of gentle yoga exercise, ujjayi breathing without retention, humming breath, alternate nostril breathing and silent meditation. Within the first few days of this practice, I could see a well being, peace abd bliss. I have continued on this practise with guidance from my yoga teacher and I have never felt better. I have got things which AOL advertises but never delivered to me. A smile from the bottom of my heart.
I agree that AOL teachings can be helpful for some people but for most people like me it has been dangerous. Had I listened to the aol teachers and continued I would have become a physical and mental wreck. I think it is important that people should be cautioned against some of the bad aspects of these practices as it can lead to harm. Yoga is a gentle art and it requires sensitivity to teach and learn. Just breathing like mad people is not yoga. It can be sensational to attract people but it will only harm them in the long run.

Anonymous PERMALINK

July 28, 2011 12:33 pm

Hi All,

Im a AOL follower for past 8 years.. i hav achived lot of benifits and seen people got cured of deadly diseases on my own eyes.

Look frenz i see my teacher instructing ppl properly.. yet i find some people do thing wrong any complain. i see teachers telling people to follow the rythm of SK and not to do it in force.. by yet ppl do it forcefully without hearing to them..

when it comes to yoga, if u dont do it properlty it will have adverse effect..

teachers ask ppl to do once a day.. but ppl after enjoying the benifts do it twice and get affected..

there was even an incident even in my experince where a participent started turning blue when doing 'Bastrika', Teacher stopped him immediatly and didnt allow him to do SK (Later came to know tat he was having heart problem). Then instructed him to do Ugai Breath alone for a period of time and after regular follow up made him to do SK and he got completely cured (Supposed to be dead in a month befor coming to course as said by his son who was a doctor, He was not even able to claim stairs when coming to course.. he s fine now). So please follow proper what is thought.

I even find ppl over doin the count.. Pls keep in Mind.. all cant be cured too..

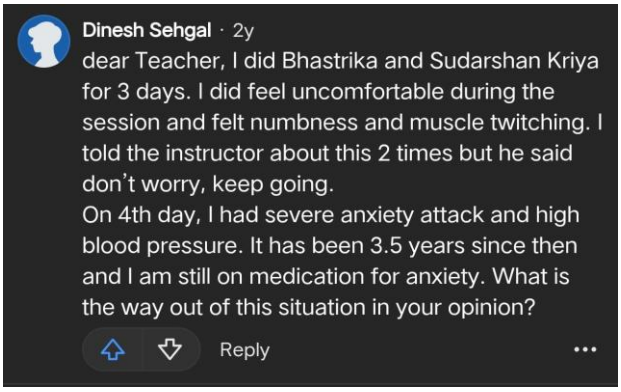
I found some comment like not getting pregnent.. See teacher even instruct ladies not to do certain prac.. but if they do it they have to face it..

#4.31, 4.32, 4.33

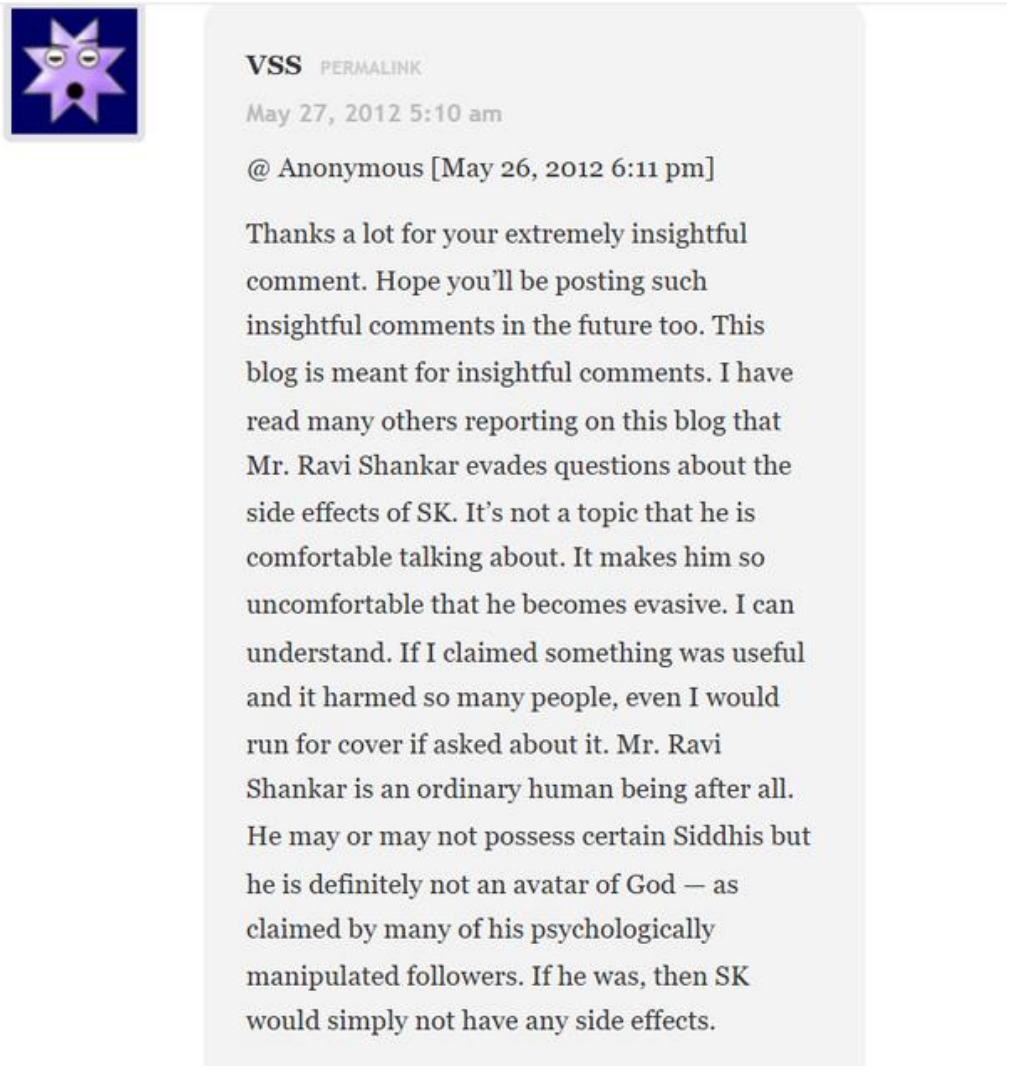
Independent_Luck_4

Over time, I've come across two instances involving Art of Living (AoL) teachers who developed serious heart conditions that required medical intervention. One of them, despite having taught several courses, had to undergo surgery for a heart-related issue. Later, this teacher mentioned they were corrected for practicing pranayama and Sudarshan Kriya incorrectly. I'm not trying to draw direct conclusions, but it felt surprising. Another teacher reportedly experienced chest discomfort, chose to rest instead of seeking help, and sadly passed away in their sleep. It was said they had participated in or conducted a Long Sudarshan Kriya earlier that day. I've also heard of seemingly healthy, vibrant AoL practitioners and teachers who suddenly suffered heart attacks or strokes at a young age—cases that felt completely unexpected given their external vitality. One of these incidents struck close to home. My cousin's uncle, a sincere and regular practitioner of both home Kriya and Long Kriya, began facing troubling symptomsafter 4 months of regular practice. After doing Long Sudarshan Kriya one morning, he experienced palpitations that evening. He shifted to simple meditation for a week and noticed some relief. But later, someone from AoL who also had some background in medical science encouraged him to continue with the full set of practices without telling them anything about including bhastrika and the fast-breathing cycles. He had a history of hypertension and diabetes, managed through medication and previously through insulin, which had been discontinued. According to my cousin's brother, he developed a persistent cough around this period—something that never subsided and for which medical tests provided no clear explanation. He continued his practice with great dedication, including loud and intense bhastrika sessions at home. About six months later, he felt chest discomfort one evening after doing Long Sudarshan Kriya earlier in the day. Tragically, he passed away that night from a sudden heart attack. It was only afterward that we learned a chronic, unexplained cough can sometimes be an indicator of underlying heart issues. One of the aunts shocked said, "How could someone so disciplined in yoga and pranayama develop such a serious condition when infact yoga and pranayama is supposed to help people stay healthy and live long" they wondered. The uncle's AoL teachers simply said it must have been his time to go. Later, when I enrolled in an AoL course myself, I noticed that the registration form includes a section asking whether participants have hypertension. For those who do, as I now understand through Reddit and other online blogs, it's recommended to avoid the fast-breathing parts of Sudarshan Kriya and bhastrika. This deeply disturbed me, because my cousin's uncle had taken the same course and was never informed of these precautions. When I raised this with a teacher, questioning why there had been no proper guidance in his case, I was told to let go of the past and focus on seva. I genuinely tried, but the unease and the questions have never fully left me. Later, I came across blog posts written by former AoL practitioners who also reported heart-related issues after practicing Sudarshan Kriya. These accounts only added to my concerns. I'm not claiming the practices directly caused his death. Perhaps it was coincidental. But he often felt unwell during travel—what everyone assumed to be motion sickness or indigestion might have been early signs of heart trouble. If he did have an underlying heart condition, and if the fast-breathing techniques can aggravate such conditions, it's painful to consider whether proper guidance could have prevented this outcome. I still wonder why follow-up sessions don't include more detailed health check-ins or reminders about modifying the practice based on individual conditions. Something as simple as reinforcing that people with hypertension or heart risks should avoid certain techniques could make a big difference. I don't know how or if AoL likely can be held responsible—there's no conclusive proof. But the questions linger, and the sorrow remains. Each time I hear of similar stories, the pain and doubt return.

4.34


Dinesh Sehgal · 2y
dear Teacher, I did Bhastrika and Sudarshan Kriya for 3 days. I did feel uncomfortable during the session and felt numbness and muscle twitching. I told the instructor about this 2 times but he said don't worry, keep going.
On 4th day, I had severe anxiety attack and high blood pressure. It has been 3.5 years since then and I am still on medication for anxiety. What is the way out of this situation in your opinion?
Reply

IMPORTANT TO NOTE- SRI SRI RAVI SHANKAR HAS BEEN OBSERVED TO GIVE EVASIVE REPLIES TO EXPERIENCES ON ADVERSE REACTIONS AND SIDE EFFECTS OF SUDARSHAN KRIYA



VSS PERMALINK

May 27, 2012 5:10 am

@ Anonymous [May 26, 2012 6:11 pm]

Thanks a lot for your extremely insightful comment. Hope you'll be posting such insightful comments in the future too. This blog is meant for insightful comments. I have read many others reporting on this blog that Mr. Ravi Shankar evades questions about the side effects of SK. It's not a topic that he is comfortable talking about. It makes him so uncomfortable that he becomes evasive. I can understand. If I claimed something was useful and it harmed so many people, even I would run for cover if asked about it. Mr. Ravi Shankar is an ordinary human being after all. He may or may not possess certain Siddhis but he is definitely not an avatar of God — as claimed by many of his psychologically manipulated followers. If he was, then SK would simply not have any side effects.

#4.35

Viji

January 16, 2012 at 4:05 pm

Hi Ananymous,

The automatic moments which you had while doing those pracices are result of mild kundalini awakening. The problem with AOL is the teachers dont know anything about it and they are of no help I am so sorry you had to go through all that. You have to immediately stop doing any yoga and pranayama or meditation practices which involves mantra. What I would suggest is you just sit with yourself in silence.

Even when I went for AOL my BP shot up so High and I had high palpitation but when I stepped on EcG it was fine then I stopped dointg that then I am fine. I just do simple pranayama and meditation. This sudrashan kriya is dangerous thing as there is no meditation being done after that and all the teachers have to say is just blindly have faith in the Guru which they might have the belief on their Guru but not others. And when they came to know iam also yoga and meditation teacher these teachers who were so freindly with me suddenly became hostile and was talking ill about what I was teaching. Anyways I just left them to whatever they are as they are held by this cult where they are all under DENIAL. But these are poor souls who are seeking but what mostly people do is they endup praying to the Guru and doing gurupooja and in the end they endup removing all the God's. godess photo and they jsut keep the Guru's foto and pray.

This is not only happening in in AOL but in sahaj meditation group where they slowly will ask you to pray their guru(mother as then call her)and iam sure many many fall for this Gulliable people. Do always remember THE GURU IS IN YOU and you just do ordinary yoga/pranayama and meditation if you are more inclained than said by those Gurus who claim it was revealed to them.Just follow what saint patanjali has taught. Listen to your heart Please.

Regards
Viji

#4.36

Vaibhav Maheshwari

July 2, 2012 at 11:49 am

Hi,

2 weeks ago, I also took the part-I course and also made my parents do it. My parents have allergy issues that causes respiratory problems. So, I thought SK should help them. But after one week of practicing it. I suddenly had terrible headache. 3 days after headache started I went to doctor and found out that my blood pressure was 150/100. I'm 30 years old but quite healthy. I do a lot of sports, don't take much stress, eat at home, avoid fried foods, etc. Doubting it was caused by kriya, I stopped doing it and my BP came back to normal. Then I found out my parents also had severe headache for days. I could see my parents were not doing the kriya as exactly told in the course but I think I was doing it quite well. My parents are 60 years old so it/s hard for them to do this kind of exercise. I've never ever experienced such serious headache in my life. I used to do lot of sheesh asana and other yoga. I think it definitely has some issues. Please reply if any one else had similar problems.

Reply

#4.37

nz

September 1, 2012 at 1:04 am

One of my frnd is suffering from over conciousness, hyper tention, migraine, insomnia, body ache as she is constantly doing sk since long n she is still not ready to accept the fact that dis is affecting her health so badly, it seriously make me feel bad and helpless. It's very inhuman, how can dey sale dis crap by the name of spirituality. N the most idiotic thing I noticed in most of the aol followers they cn argue on baseless facts, I Dnt Knw what these teachers feed in there brain which make them so absent minded. Well, thank you so much guys for sharing your experiences I hope it will help me further.

Reply

#4.38

srivitha

May 29, 2019 at 1:15 am

Hello Everyone,
Istarted SK 8 months ago, impacted negitively with SK – palputation,anxiety, fear of what is going to happen, hypervetilation.Please help me how to come out of it naturally with out medicines

Reply

#4.39

Prana

July 7, 2017 at 9:37 am

No intelligent person can deny the correlation between SK and hyperventilation. I did the SK and it was probably the worst experience of my life, similar to a panic attack I had many years ago. Instead of finding happiness I found I was very unhappy, irritable and tired. Heart palpitations were crazy and a general feeling of illness. I dropped out of the AOL course and decided to do some research about this SK practise. Turns out a lot of people have bad experiences. All the positive reviews are either on AOL website or bogus research papers. I am sure there are not many real doctors who will encourage hyperventilation to “heal” yourself.

Reply

#4.40

An objective participant reasons that Sudarshan Kriya is Hyperventilation

SEPTEMBER 30, 2011

by The Doctor

by Rawen Maharashi

> ***Editor's Note –*** *The following post was recently sent to us with the Spanish version first and what appears to be an English translation afterwards. Here I have simply reversed the order.*

English Version
From Argentina, September 28/09/2011

... Continued below ... which is part of a note sent to the International Foundation where I expose my particular experience, research and opinion on the practice of Sudarshan Kriya, after attending the Level 1 course

Part of the letter ....

... .. So, as I said before, in search of food that nurtures my experience and knowledge, come to decide to take the seminar "The Art of Living" in June of 2011, with the question in my mind: " And this concerned? ".

https://aolfree.wordpress.com/2011/09/30/an-objective-participant-reasons-that-sudarshan-kriya-is-hyperventilation/

In June 2011, I participated in the Art of Living's Level 1 course in Argentina, seeking to deepen my understanding of their breathing techniques, particularly Sudarshan Kriya. I approached the experience with an open mind, neither supporting nor opposing the foundation, aiming instead for an objective exploration.

During the course, we engaged in various breathing exercises, including the "Long Kriya" and "Short Kriya." I observed that many participants experienced intense physical and emotional reactions: exhaustion, anger, emotional outbursts, depression, dry mouth, dizziness, cramps, and cold extremities, despite being in a climate-controlled environment. These symptoms resembled those associated with hyperventilation.

I questioned the necessity of inducing such physiological strain to achieve altered states of consciousness. Drawing from my background in transpersonal psychology and practices like astral projection, I recognized that similar states could be reached through gentler means. The course's emphasis on not discussing the techniques with outsiders, dietary restrictions, and warnings for individuals with certain health conditions further raised my concerns.

Reflecting on these experiences, I concluded that Sudarshan Kriya might function as a form of controlled hyperventilation, leading to altered consciousness through physiological stress rather than meditative depth. This realization prompted me to reconsider the practice's safety and efficacy.

The author of this letter from Argentina shares a personal experience and critical analysis following their participation in **THE ART OF LIVING** Part 1 course, which includes the practice of Sudarshan Kriya, a registered breathing technique developed by Sri Sri Ravi Shankar.

The writer attended **THE ART OF LIVING** seminar in June 2011 out of curiosity and a desire for spiritual exploration. Initially open-minded and neutral, they did not take a stance for or against the Foundation. Their

reflections aim to provide an objective and investigative perspective, not to initiate debate or attack the organization.

During the course, the author noted:

- Basic yoga exercises were taught, followed by intense breathing techniques labelled as “Sudarshan Kriya,” including “long” and “short” breathing sessions.
- These techniques led many participants to altered states of consciousness, triggering strong emotional and physical reactions, such as exhaustion, irritability, depression, thirst, dizziness, dry mouth, cramps, and cold extremities.
- These symptoms resembled those of hyperventilation.

The author, with experience in astral projection and transpersonal psychology, deliberately followed the breathing exercises on the third day, reaching an altered state and experiencing an astral journey. However, they became concerned about the physiological strain and potential health risks involved.

After skipping the fourth day due to fatigue and high blood pressure, they consulted their cardiologist, who confirmed that the breathing practice closely resembled clinical hyperventilation-a medically controlled process used for certain psychological and cardiac conditions.

Main Concerns Raised:

1. Lack of Transparency:
    - Participants were not informed beforehand that the breathing would induce altered states via hyperventilation.
    - There was no explanation of potential benefits or risks, and participants weren’t allowed to give informed consent.
2. Physiological Risks of Hyperventilation:
    - Causes excessive oxygen intake and carbon dioxide loss, leading to alkalosis (high blood pH), restricted cerebral blood flow, and symptoms like dizziness, confusion, tingling, fainting, and in extreme cases, neural damage.
    - Long-term use can trigger latent psychological conditions due to emotional stress responses.
3. Legal and Ethical Issues:
    - In Argentina, Law No. 26529 requires that medical procedures (including hyperventilation) be clearly explained to patients, with informed consent.
    - Performing medical procedures without a license is considered illegal medical practice.
4. Short-term Benefits vs Long-term Risks:
    - The technique may produce temporary relief or euphoria through endorphin release and stress relief, similar to pain blocking in acupuncture.
    - However, it does not address underlying health conditions, and the risks might outweigh the benefits when used unsupervised.

5. Comparison to Dangerous Trends:
    - The author draws a parallel to the risky "fainting game" (known as "the choking game" or "the death game"), where hyperventilation causes youth to faint-sometimes fatally-highlighting that the mechanism is the same, even if the context differs.

Anonymous – *October 8, 2011, 4:02 PM*

Dear stupidseeker, freeOne, and Anonymous:

I haven't yet sent letters to TV channels or investigative programs, but I am drafting letters to push for investigations—not only by journalists, but also by the National Ministry of Health and various medical associations.

The practice of hyperventilation in any form—without informed consent—is considered a medical procedure in our country, and informing patients is a legal requirement. Not doing so is a criminal offense, especially when conducted by individuals without medical qualifications. Only licensed doctors (such as general practitioners, psychiatrists, cardiologists) are authorized to direct such practices.

The most concerning part of these courses is that participants are not informed about the hyperventilation technique or its potential consequences, which prevents them from giving informed consent. Worse, it seems the instructors themselves are either unaware of the dangers or choose to ignore them.

My report also explains why Kriya induces a short-term sense of well-being: it's caused by a state of analgesia, triggered by endorphins released in response to the physical and pulmonary stress of the exercise.

See you soon,

Rawen Maharashi – *October 8, 2011, 7:35 PM*

Dear Anonymous, freeOne, and stupidseeker:

I haven't yet submitted anything to the media, but the Ministry of Health has been alerted due to the evident public health risk.

The core issue is that seminar participants are not informed that they will undergo physical and pulmonary stress via hyperventilation—a medically recognized technique that should be administered only by qualified professionals.

As this blog has pointed out, it seems Art of Living instructors are either unaware of this or deliberately ignore it. As a result, participants suffer long-term physical and psychological consequences, potentially leading to lawsuits.

As I mentioned previously, Sudarshan Kriya brings a temporary feeling of well-being due to the body's release of endorphins under stress. The brain signals the hypothalamus to alert the glandular system, releasing endorphins to restore balance—producing a state of analgesia that can last up to 24–48 hours. However, this does not solve underlying conditions and can lead to serious long-term issues: neuronal death, depleted levels of potassium, calcium, phosphorus, and especially myelin. Prolonged practice results in symptoms like dull eyes, premature graying, brittle nails, respiratory issues, pulmonary aging, edema, arrhythmias, allergies, muscle pain, and more.

Let's remember: **hyperventilation is an illness, not a remedy.** People with heart conditions, phobias, epilepsy, etc., already hyperventilate by nature.

#4.41

r/Ex_ArtOfLiving • 2 days ago
Independent_Luck_429

Anyone experienced negative effects after Sudarshan Kriya? Seeking help and real solutions.

Has anyone here has experienced negative effects from Sudarshan Kriya. I started the practice with hope for peace and overcoming bad habits, but over time, my experience turned into something deeply unsettling.

I began feeling a heavy head, palpitations, and increasing anxiety and worry, which were never issues before. I lost my sense of purpose and ambition in my academics and career — I ended up drifting between courses, thinking each new one would fix things. Eventually, my life became entirely consumed by AOL — seva, kriyas, recruiting, and doing one course after another. Running after the crowd to get proximity to the Guru ji as he rampwalked on Maha satsangs.

Even after feeling strange and off — mentally and physically — after Long Kriyas, I was told it was just part of the purification process. When I reached out for help, teachers only advised me to do more courses, more seva, and to do the TTC — no one truly listened or took my concerns seriously.

Things worsened. I began experiencing dizziness, anxiety, panic-like states, and an overwhelming fear that kept me from functioning normally.

What's even more alarming is hearing about others. I personally know of two AOL teachers who developed heart problems, and I've heard of young, seemingly healthy volunteers and teachers who tragically died from heart attacks. A cousin's uncle — a long-time practitioner — also passed away due to a heart attack. I've read others online talking about palpitations and health issues that they were told to ignore or work through with "more practice."

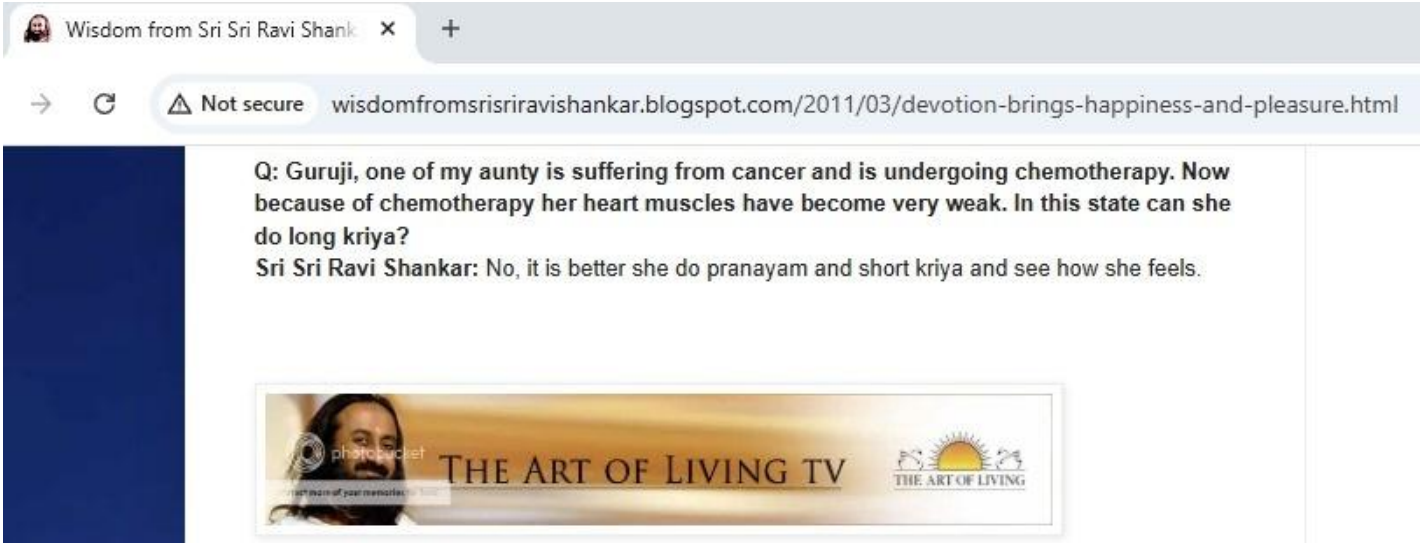
Now, I'm honestly scared and just trying to understand what's happening. I'm not here to condemn the practice or the people — I just really need to hear from real individuals who might have gone through something similar and found a way to recover and restore balance.

If you've experienced this and found a way out, please share. I'd deeply appreciate any guidance or help.

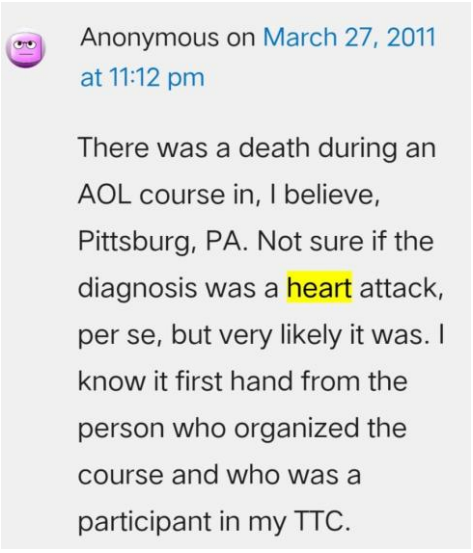
Thank you.

#4.42

IMPORTANT TO NOTE- Long sudarshan kriya is not advised to be done by those with any sort of condition or weakness of the heart or heart muscles or undergoing chemotherapy. But this instruction is never announced before Long Sudarshan Kriya sessions during weekly follow ups across the world!


Wisdom from Sri Sri Ravi Shank
Not secure
wisdomfromsrisriravishankar.blogspot.com/2011/03/devotion-brings-happiness-and-pleasure.html
Q: Guruji, one of my aunty is suffering from cancer and is undergoing chemotherapy. Now because of chemotherapy her heart muscles have become very weak. In this state can she do long kriya?
Sri Sri Ravi Shankar: No, it is better she do pranayam and short kriya and see how she feels.
THE ART OF LIVING TV
THE ART OF LIVING

#4.43



Anonymous on March 27, 2011 at 11:12 pm

There was a death during an AOL course in, I believe, Pittsburg, PA. Not sure if the diagnosis was a heart attack, per se, but very likely it was. I know it first hand from the person who organized the course and who was a participant in my TTC.

#4.44

Jaya said...

Klim - Thanks for the Blog.Several doubts I had about AOL has been confirmed. Thanks for articles and comments. I practiced Sudarshan Kriya along with pranayama for six months and result was not good. I suffered from Headaches, constipation and irregular heart beat. AOL teacher was hardly helpful in understand my problem.I first stopped the weekly long kriya and then short kriya. I have gone back to my old suryanamaskara and pranayama sequence and enjoying great health like before. But I still had doubts that I was doing some thing wrong and why sudarshan kriya is not good to me. I did not have confidence to question practice. But I see many people here have experienced same thing what I went through. I would have saved lot of suffering if I had stopped Kriya earlier. better late than never.

JANUARY 11, 2010 AT 11:47 AM

"The heart answers every breath. Some practitioners noticed palpitations, shot up blood pressure, or unsteady changes in pulse and some were unfortunately reported to have known cardiovascular events. Their stories ask us to respect the body's pace as sacred. These accounts remind teachers to screen for hypertension, cardiovascular disease and fatigue, and to pair spiritual enthusiasm with physiological care. Compassion is the safest rhythm of all"

Reported Adverse Effects Domain 5- Kundalini Sickness & Carpopedal Spasms

SUMMARY OF ADVERSE REACTIONS AND SIDE EFFECTS

ACTUAL LIST OF ADVERSE SYMPTOMS REPORTED IN ONLINE REVIEWS AND COMMENTS:
UNPREPARED KUNDALINI AWAKENING, KUNDALINI SICKNESS, PAIN, TINGLING IN LIMBS, CRAMPS AND SPASMS

NUMBER OF CASES REPORTED:
AT LEAST 30 FOUND ON INTERNET. THERE ARE MORE SUSPECTED TO BE OFFLINE OR UNREPORTED ON INTERNET

UNDERSTANDING KUNDALINI SICKNESS OR SYNDROME: A BRIEF BACKGROUND ON UNPREPARED OR PREMATURE KUNDALINI AWAKENING

Kundalini Syndrome refers to a range of intense physical, emotional, and psychological symptoms that may emerge following the awakening of Kundalini energy-a dormant spiritual force traditionally described in yogic philosophy as residing at the base of the spine. While Kundalini awakening is often regarded as a profound spiritual transformation, it can sometimes result in destabilizing and disorienting experiences, particularly when it occurs suddenly, without proper guidance, or in individuals not mentally or emotionally prepared.

This phenomenon can also be understood as a form of Altered State of Consciousness (ASC). In such states, individuals may experience shifts in perception, identity, body awareness, emotional regulation, and cognitive functioning. Kundalini awakenings, especially when intense or unmanaged, often involve significant changes in consciousness that resemble or fall under the umbrella of ASC-such as mystical states, dissociation, or heightened sensory awareness. However, unlike some intentional or transient ASCs (induced by meditation, breathwork, or psychedelics), Kundalini Syndrome can persist longer and carry unintended psychological consequences if not integrated properly.

Risks Involved in Kundalini Awakening Practices:

Common symptoms associated with Kundalini Syndrome include:

- Involuntary body movements or spasms
- Intense heat, energy surges, or internal vibrations
- Anxiety, panic attacks, or depressive episodes
- Hallucinations or altered states of consciousness
- Insomnia and emotional dysregulation
- Depersonalization, dissociation, or psychotic-like states

Such experiences are often distressing and can be misdiagnosed as psychiatric disorders if not recognized in the spiritual context.

Credible gurus who have acknowledged these risks:

1. Gopi Krishna – Documented a spontaneous Kundalini awakening that caused years of turmoil before integration, urging serious preparation and caution.
2. Swami Sivananda – Warned against premature awakening, highlighting the risk of psychological imbalance and the necessity of moral and spiritual discipline.

3. Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa – Advised that awakening should come naturally through divine grace and purity, not through forceful practices.
4. Carl Jung – Studied Kundalini symbolically and psychologically, warning that without the right framework, its effects could overwhelm the psyche.

Why participants should be informed and give consent:

1. Psychological Safety: Sudden awakenings can cause lasting emotional or mental disturbances.
2. Informed Choice: Participants have a right to understand the risks before engaging in spiritually potent practices.
3. Support and Guidance: Awareness leads to seeking proper mentorship and professional help if needed.
4. Ethical Transparency: Responsible disclosure protects both participants and organizations from unintended harm.

Further reading: https://saiayurvedic.com/kundalini-syndrome-the-dangers-of-unpreparedness

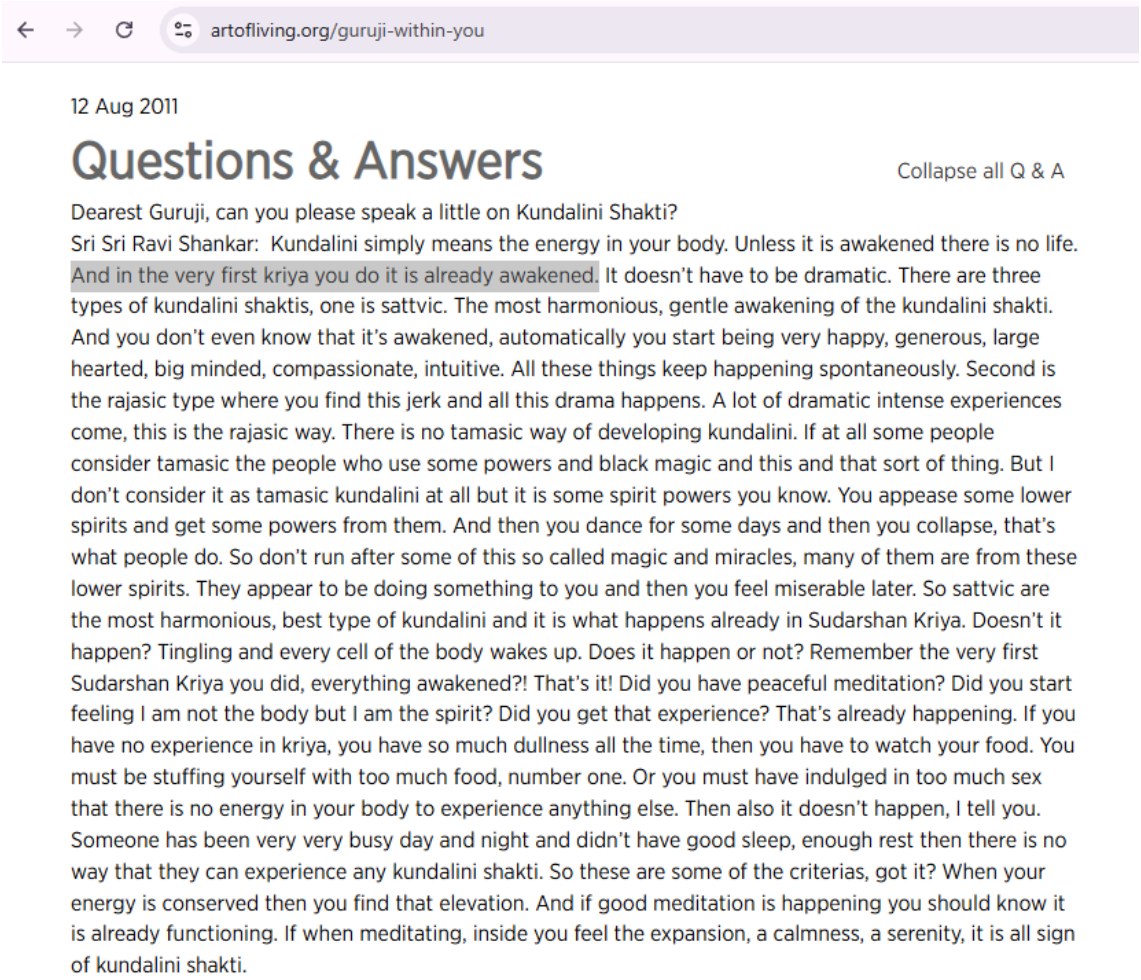
CONCERNING OMISSION OF KUNDALINI AWAKENING DISCLAIMER IN THE ART OF LIVING PROGRAMS:

Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, the founder of **THE ART OF LIVING FOUNDATION**, has publicly stated on multiple occasions that Sudarshan Kriya has the power to awaken Kundalini energy. The technique, which involves specific breathing rhythms and meditative focus, often leads participants to report sensations consistent with early Kundalini awakening-such as heat, vibrations, emotional releases, or trance-like states.

Despite this, none of **THE ART OF LIVING'S** introductory or advanced programs-including those involving meditation at the base of the spine, energy channel visualizations, or rhythmic breathwork-explicitly mention Kundalini awakening or warn of Kundalini Syndrome. Moreover, participants are not asked to give informed consent acknowledging the potential psychological or energetic risks involved.

This lack of disclosure raises ethical concerns, especially for vulnerable individuals who may unknowingly engage in practices capable of triggering powerful psycho-spiritual processes without being mentally, emotionally, or spiritually prepared. In contrast to organizations like the Pranic Healing Foundation (https://pranaworld.net/kundalini-syndrome/), **THE ART OF LIVING'S** omission of forewarning and consent regarding Kundalini-related risks appears to represent a serious oversight.

Sri Sri Ravi Shankar has publicly stated that Sudarshan Kriya has the potential to awaken Kundalini energy. In fact, he notes that for many practitioners, Kundalini activation occurs during their very first session. At the same time, he emphasizes that Kundalini should not be forcefully awakened, but rather allowed to rise naturally and effortlessly. This presents a notable contradiction. A close examination of the Sudarshan Kriya technique reveals that it involves a structured sequence of controlled and intense pranayama exercises, including specific breath patterns performed in regulated rhythms-long, medium, and short cycles. These practices demand conscious effort and control, and therefore cannot reasonably be described as "natural" or "effortless" in any conventional sense.



artofliving.org/guruji-within-you

12 Aug 2011

Questions & Answers

Collapse all Q & A

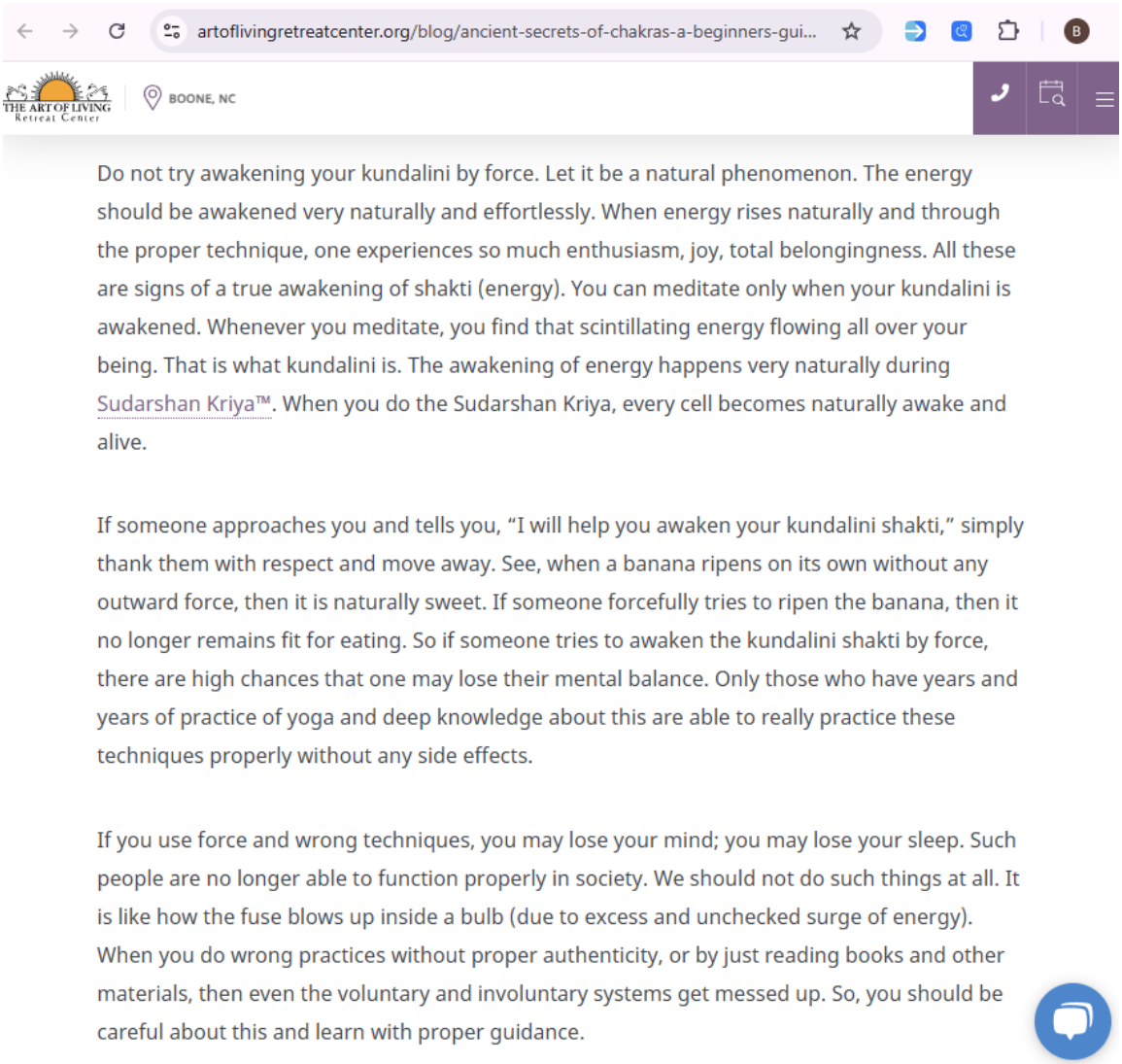
Dearest Guruji, can you please speak a little on Kundalini Shakti?

Sri Sri Ravi Shankar: Kundalini simply means the energy in your body. Unless it is awakened there is no life. And in the very first kriya you do it is already awakened. It doesn't have to be dramatic. There are three types of kundalini shaktis, one is sattvic. The most harmonious, gentle awakening of the kundalini shakti. And you don't even know that it's awakened, automatically you start being very happy, generous, large hearted, big minded, compassionate, intuitive. All these things keep happening spontaneously. Second is the rajasic type where you find this jerk and all this drama happens. A lot of dramatic intense experiences come, this is the rajasic way. There is no tamasic way of developing kundalini. If at all some people consider tamasic the people who use some powers and black magic and this and that sort of thing. But I don't consider it as tamasic kundalini at all but it is some spirit powers you know. You appease some lower spirits and get some powers from them. And then you dance for some days and then you collapse, that's what people do. So don't run after some of this so called magic and miracles, many of them are from these lower spirits. They appear to be doing something to you and then you feel miserable later. So sattvic are the most harmonious, best type of kundalini and it is what happens already in Sudarshan Kriya. Doesn't it happen? Tingling and every cell of the body wakes up. Does it happen or not? Remember the very first Sudarshan Kriya you did, everything awakened?! That's it! Did you have peaceful meditation? Did you start feeling I am not the body but I am the spirit? Did you get that experience? That's already happening. If you have no experience in kriya, you have so much dullness all the time, then you have to watch your food. You must be stuffing yourself with too much food, number one. Or you must have indulged in too much sex that there is no energy in your body to experience anything else. Then also it doesn't happen, I tell you. Someone has been very very busy day and night and didn't have good sleep, enough rest then there is no way that they can experience any kundalini shakti. So these are some of the criterias, got it? When your energy is conserved then you find that elevation. And if good meditation is happening you should know it is already functioning. If when meditating, inside you feel the expansion, a calmness, a serenity, it is all sign of kundalini shakti.

Thus, based on Sri Sri Ravi Shankar's own statements, a critical tension emerges: Sudarshan Kriya is both described as a practice that activates Kundalini, and yet Kundalini is also something he warns should not be awakened through effort. If the technique involves deliberate, effort-based breath control-and yet leads to the awakening of a force that, according to the teacher himself, should not be awakened forcefully-does this not represent a contradiction? More importantly, should individuals knowingly engage in a practice that, by the founder's own admission, may induce Kundalini activation-particularly when he also cautions against exactly such a result through willful effort?

Furthermore, if **THE ART OF LIVING FOUNDATION** organization acknowledges that Sudarshan Kriya has the potential to trigger Kundalini awakening, it raises serious ethical questions about informed consent and participant safety. It is well-documented in spiritual and psychological literature that Kundalini awakening-particularly when unanticipated-can lead to intense psycho-spiritual experiences, sometimes resulting in psychological destabilization, a condition often referred to as Kundalini Syndrome.

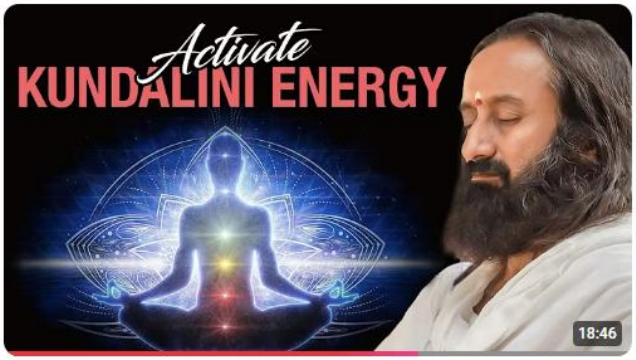
Given these possible effects, especially for psychologically vulnerable individuals, it is concerning that **THE ART OF LIVING FOUNDATION** programs do not provide clear health disclaimers or warnings about the potential risks. Many participants remain unaware that they are engaging in a technique known to affect subtle psycho-energetic systems. The lack of transparency and informed consent in this context raises substantial ethical concerns about the organization's responsibility to ensure participant safety and to clearly communicate the nature of the practices being taught.


artoflivingretreatcenter.org/blog/ancient-secrets-of-chakras-a-beginners-gui...
THE ART OF LIVING Retreat Center
BOONE, NC
Do not try awakening your kundalini by force. Let it be a natural phenomenon. The energy should be awakened very naturally and effortlessly. When energy rises naturally and through the proper technique, one experiences so much enthusiasm, joy, total belongingness. All these are signs of a true awakening of shakti (energy). You can meditate only when your kundalini is awakened. Whenever you meditate, you find that scintillating energy flowing all over your being. That is what kundalini is. The awakening of energy happens very naturally during Sudarshan Kriya™. When you do the Sudarshan Kriya, every cell becomes naturally awake and alive.
If someone approaches you and tells you, "I will help you awaken your kundalini shakti," simply thank them with respect and move away. See, when a banana ripens on its own without any outward force, then it is naturally sweet. If someone forcefully tries to ripen the banana, then it no longer remains fit for eating. So if someone tries to awaken the kundalini shakti by force, there are high chances that one may lose their mental balance. Only those who have years and years of practice of yoga and deep knowledge about this are able to really practice these techniques properly without any side effects.
If you use force and wrong techniques, you may lose your mind; you may lose your sleep. Such people are no longer able to function properly in society. We should not do such things at all. It is like how the fuse blows up inside a bulb (due to excess and unchecked surge of energy). When you do wrong practices without proper authenticity, or by just reading books and other materials, then even the voluntary and involuntary systems get messed up. So, you should be careful about this and learn with proper guidance.

https://artoflivingretreatcenter.org/blog/ancient-secrets-of-chakras-a-beginners-guide-part-2/

Apparent Contradiction: While the* THE ART OF LIVING FOUNDATION *incorporates practices associated with Kundalini energy,

Sri Sri Ravi Shankar advises caution regarding those who explicitly claim to awaken Kundalini



Open The Root Chakra and Awaken The Kundalini Energy - Guided Meditation by Gurudev

335K views • 2 years ago

Meditations By Gurudev

Meditations By Gurudev is the Art Of Living's official YouTube channel for all meditations by Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar.

INSTANCES OF ADVERSE REACTIONS RELATED TO KUNDALINI SYNDROME AND CARPOPEDAL SPASMS AND SIDE EFFECTS REPORTED ONLINE

#5.1

Skanda priya

February 23, 2012 at 9:57 pm

Have done the beginners course in AOL .I had the strangest emotional upheavals which are not in keeping with my normal character in those few days . On the last day , after the rapid breathing session my muscles went into severe spasms like a mild paralytic twist . Took a while to get out of the trance and for the pain to subside . I think its something of a kundalini crisis that was triggered . After 11 years I still get tendon inflammations and joint pains which coincidentally started at that time ...

Reply

#5.2

Srinivasan R Iyer · 4y

The HAPPINESS program awakens the KUNDALINI for some people. Its a dormant feminine energy which can play havoc if you are not grounded properly in spirituality, yogic & meditative practices. I am pasting 2 links here and one is of someone who had similar experiences like the above

What is a Kundalini Awakening and Have I Had One?

Kundalini and Spiritual Awakening

Here's a link to the website to get some help specifically to manage the symptoms of awakening Kundalini - Kundalini - The Soul's Journey. It is prone to mis-diagnosis.

This is an excerpt from the above website - "The awakened Kundalini can stir up everything from latent diseases of the body to emotional or psychological disturbances. Some people feel like chaos has descended upon them, not grace, as Kundalini renovates body, mind and relationships. "

#5.3

Deepesh Deomurari · Follow
Art of Living Senior Faculty · 6y

Yes - it does; but in subtle way. Don't think once you activate kundlini you will experience some blasting energy.

There are three types of Kundalini. I will cover it sometime - but straight forward, yes - it awaken Kundalini within and due to which after Kriya - you can experience higher states of meditation and infact your sensitivity increases and mantra chanting will start having direct positive impact and you can feel vibration and good energy vibes.

#5.4

Does Sudarshan Kriya activate Kundalini?

All related (38) Sort Recommended

Anonymous
6y

It is saddening to know those practicing Sudarshan Kriya are unaware about it's connection with Kundalini Awakening.

Instead of shelling out opinions practioners should look up to the Guru and refer what he has said in this context.

> Sri Sri Ravi Shankar:
>
> Kundalini simply means the energy in your body. Unless it is awakened there is no life. And **in the very first kriya you do it is already awakened**. It doesn't have to be dramatic.

If one goes by this definition one has to understand that this Kriya does awaken Kundalini energy.

Hence those practicing it need to take care and ensure they follow Yamas, Niyamas and eat proper diet recommended for Kundalini practices in general so that they avoid experiencing any Kundalini Syndrome which is mainly caused due to energy imbalances.

More important is that Kriya breathing has different guidelines to be followed for those with some health conditions. This is not generally known at large and must be enquired from at least 3 teachers and one senior teacher, so that one is not at loss due to the lack of knowledge of only 1 teacher whom he or she may consult.

It would be helpful if Art of Living can make these guidelines for special cases published and available so that no two teachers give guidelines differently.

Link for the quote is given in footnote for reference.

3.1K views · View 5 upvotes

#5.5

Vishal Gaba · 3y

My kundalini was awakened by sudarshan kriya without my consent. It has made me mad.. my legs are like think needle. My face has lost luster. I feel fear all the time like a mad man.. as if someone is around me. It causes damage in all aspects of life. Only ravi kankar must have got rich doing it. Rest all became poor. That's why asaram, ram Rahim and rampal are in jail.. they mislead n misguide people on the path they have walked and they themselves know it is a useless path only to fall in a pit forever..

#5.6

Vinny PERMALINK

December 28, 2011 6:12 am

First off, this is probably due to you not being in direct guidance by a true Enlightened Master. Do not blame Kriyas or ancient spiritual techniques due to your ignorance! You can't just practice intense kriyas and meditation techniques without such guidance because if you do it intensily as it seems you did, the Kundalini Shakti awakens and if its not controlled by One who is adept in it, then you will have a lot of issues.

When my Kundalini awoke a few years ago, I had a lot of chest pains, like I was having mini-heart attacks every 20-30mins..it was very painful. It does not mean the shakti/practices are wrong, it's that you do not have the intelligence to control your Prana properly. You have too many blocks! Chest pains or pains around heart area indicate your Anahata Chakra opening. If you are guided by a true Enlightened Master, he will make sure the prana flow/Kundalini energy flow up the right Nadis with the correct amount.

#5.7

Vineela on January 12, 2010 at 2:42 am | Reply

Hi guruji
This is to inform you that when i finish doing sudarshan kriya
my hip (in hindi kamar) lifts up automatically and sometimes i feel someone is writing A B C on my back with a finger. STRANGE! Is that related to kundalini shakthi guruji?
Bye Guruji.

#5.8

Naveen Pandey · Mar 10

Yes I experienced this. My kundalini awakening happened after practicing kriya at home after I was angry at myself for having engaged in PMO. I immediately did kriya in anger after shower, and instantly the kundalini rose to head. I had problems having balance, and ended up experiencing increased negative thoughts like voices, OCD etc. No body told me to prepare for it in any way.

After that I have become too emotionally sensitive and can sense energy in different places and people, and I feel overwhelmed by sensory inputs.

#5.9

Anonymous
4y

Related **How many of you do sudarshan Kriya? My hands get really hard and I can't move my fingers while doing sudarshan Kriya.this happens when I am breathing fast and I breathe deeply as well? How many of you face this problem and am I doing wrong?**

Dear one,

Please remember to practice the technique as taught to you by your Art of Living teacher.

You must do the following correctly. All counts to be followed precisely:

1. 3 stage pranayama (ujjai breathing)
2. Bhastrika (normal breath in, forceful breath out. Don't do this in a fast pace or aggressively)
3. Kriya breathing cycles (to be done gently and light subtle breathing just as you smell a flower. Very important. Many breathe wrongly as if they are participating in a breathing race)

To do the breathing correctly please use the Abhyaasa app.

If you still face the same symptoms, then reduce the ... (more)

You upvoted this

#5.10

anonymous PERMALINK

January 24, 2011 2:17 pm

Slightly Different Take:

A very knowledgeable yogi, whom I met at the ashram (he was visiting), observed the SK and later told me this:

He had not seen such unhealthy looking people as those doing the practices. He said that this type of breathing practice is indicated for those living in pristine, clean environments, such as the Himalayas, and living a particular, austere lifestyle, which no worldly people would be interested in living. Otherwise, he said, these SK would cause health problems of all sorts, in his opinion, and his observations of the group, he felt, supported his opinion. I stopped the SK after that conversation, and did leave AOL. My health improved immediately, slowly returning to normal after about a year of not doing SK.

#5.11

sadhana PERMALINK

June 6, 2012 8:33 pm

Everybody claiming that SK has caused them physical or mental problems, please read this site..it's Wikipedia about 'Kundalini syndrome' Uttam has mentioned.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kundalini_syndrome

Please verify your symptoms with it. Also one can check search 'kundalini awakening' and see other sites those give symptoms of 'Kundalini awakening'..

#5.12

Anonymous PERMALINK

June 6, 2012 11:09 pm

Sadhana, If all the negative side effects are “kundalini syndrome” why does AOL and Ravi Shankar and all the teachers not warn people that this could happen before they take the course? Why not just spell it out “you could get kundalini syndrome, and it would be dreadful….” They don’t say anything like that. I personally don’t see how someone who is a senior teacher for 20 years could be having kundalini syndrome for the whole 20 years, do you? But the SK and Ravi Shankar are clearly affecting the minds and actions of some of the teachers — they are rude, irrational, childish, paranoid, etc., many times. So are they all having this kundalini syndrome? Is that why so many of them are so sick? Does the syndrome, according to you, last for decades? Because their behavior is the same, or worse.

#5.13

The Doctor PERMALINK

June 7, 2012 3:01 pm

Right on the money Dayalu.

I heard this mentioned so many times when I was in AoL, that SK was awakening kundalini, that RS could awaken kundalini, and that even doing Sri Sri yoga could awaken kundalini!

But when I did further research into kundalini after leaving AoL, I came to realize that any and all talk of kundalini in AoL is complete and utter BS, by people who don’t have the faintest idea what kundalini is or how to awaken it. It’s just another device they use to brainwash people into thinking that the high they experience from SK (aka hyperventilation) results in some sort of spiritual awakening inside them. But as Dayalu pointed out, show me someone who has been practicing SK for any amount of time who is showing even the slightest signs (and these are well-documented) of someone whose kundalini has been awakened.

sadhana PERMALINK

June 8, 2012 4:22 am

Anon,search 'kundalini' on net.You will get all information.

Anonymous..may be they should tell it earlier. But as it seems a large number of people are going through courses without actually experiencing it. so telling everyone and scaring them may be is considered pointless. They are at least getting benefits of course points,meditations etc. (may be at subtle level some other benefits.)

As I know it,there is a big class in India who would hesitate to enroll in a class that claims to awaken 'kundalini'. I am 100 % among one of such people.. so because of this policy of not telling,all these people are doing SK without being scared.

Then there could be a class among these people who might say we didn't feel our kundalini awakened as claimed by this course and feel betrayed..so may be it's better not to say anything initially..One who has to know will know it anyway.

But yes,may be for people who have developed symptoms,it should be discussed..Again may be if one has complete faith and surrender as Uttam has pointed out, it happens in many ways other than actual conversation. We just have to be open for that.

Other thing is in last 9 years,nobody told me anything about SK and kundalini..I realized it during one advance course and another course after few years confirmed it..of course I had at least some background information on kundalini so as to know it.

I can't name senior teachers who have reached the last stage or whose 'kundalini' is in fully awakened state as I don't know them personally. But I think nobody who is mature enough is going to say that themselves.
But I'm sure there are definitely few of them who are at different stages..That is something we experience during advance or satsang..Spiritual level or overall experience of satsang/courses with such people is totally different..

It takes thousands of years of tap-sadhana with faith to achieve such states..30 years is too short period to assess it.

By the way,I don't know who is suffering for 20 years with such symptoms..At least here we don't know any of this.

#5.15

Shari

May 16, 2017 at 12:48 am

Yes I had a kundalini awakening due to this Kriya but it was a horror experience because I was unprepared

#5.16

ananymous

August 7, 2011 at 8:46 pm

after doing part one just within 2 months i had done DSN

while doing that course Padmasadhana n kriya n all….i was started feeling like i m having some power

i think dat was just a mind game…n just love to be with me only…

n while doing yoga n kriya my movements was quite strange
\
my body parts was moving like by their own… n taking different movements which r generally dont happen in regular sadhana

i didnt understand this

i was literally started behaving like psycho…

i was thinking too much..u can say enormous thought process was going in my mind

i totally lost my mind control…

fall asick n hospitalised n diagnosed as acute psychosis…

Reply

#5.17

Viji

January 16, 2012 at 4:05 pm

Hi Ananymous,

The automatic moments which you had while doing those pracices are result of mild kundalini awakening. The problem with AOL is the teachers dont know anything about it and they are of no help I am so sorry you had to go through all that. You have to immediately stop doing any yoga and pranayama or meditation practices which involves mantra. What I would suggest is you just sit with yourself in silence.

Even when I went for AOL my BP shot up so High and I had high palpitation but when I stepped on EcG it was fine then I stopped dointg that then I am fine. I just do simple pranayama and meditation. This sudrashan kriya is dangerous thing as there is no meditation being done after that and all the teachers have to say is just blindly have faith in the Guru which they might have the belief on their Guru but not others. And when they came to know iam also yoga and meditation teacher these teachers who were so freindly with me suddenly became hostile and was talking ill about what I was teaching. Anyways I just left them to whatever they are as they are held by this cult where they are all under DENIAL. But these are poor souls who are seeking but what mostly people do is they endup praying to the Guru and doing gurupooja and in the end they endup removing all the God's. godess photo and they jsut keep the Guru's foto and pray.

This is not only happening in in AOL but in sahaj meditation group where they slowly will ask you to pray their guru(mother as then call her)and iam sure many many fall for this Gulliable people. Do always remember THE GURU IS IN YOU and you just do ordinary yoga/pranayama and meditation if you are more inclained than said by those Gurus who claim it was revealed to them.Just follow what saint patanjali has taught. Listen to your heart Please.

Regards
Viji

#5.18

shalu

October 25, 2012 at 12:36 pm

you are so right about the kundalini awakening here….

Reply

#5.19

anonymous

July 28, 2012 at 11:35 pm

i have had experienced stuff much more serious than u have…. doing sk since i was 18..now im 24.. firstly, since i started practising SK, 4 1st 3 years i'd almost blissful nd energetic nd lively nd glamorous xperiences..my looks improved, i was mentally peaceful, i became more extrovert than earlier etc etc…sfter those 3 yrs suddenly i'd a tingling sensation in the base of the spine nd all hell broke loose…since then i had innumerable symptoms 2 my issues with health… i feel weakness in the muscles, cant eat spicy food, premature agin, lost my vibrance, kinda depressd…. but now im kinda managing all this doing SK nd having an ayurvedic medicine called triphala.. so far, its goin fine…ive also consultd many doctors nd medicines but no respite… i will nd definetly get back 2 who i am 1 day… no1 can stop me from acheiving wat i want, these health issues have made me a more matured nd stronger person… thse problems tat u have described in ur blog r just genuine but shouldnt stop u from living a life tat u want… dont let others, aol teachers, or a guru stand in ur path..but yes keep a little faith in ur master even if hes a cheater cos its urfaith not his…gnit, ive my mba classes tomrw

Reply

#5.20

Ishan

September 4, 2012 at 4:23 am

look..do some research on da internet about 'kundalini"..n trust me ders a lot of material available...dat tingling sensation in da base of da spine u talked bout..is a classic symptom of kundalini energy awakening..and da bad effects u xperinced happen when it is nt properly channelised.. all dis may sound like absloute crap..bt its nt . google 'kundalini',read bout it on wikipedia...by far the best source of info i found is dis website: http://www.icrcanada.org/learn
read about gopi krishna. And please do all the above things for ur own gud.

Reply

#5.21

Vikram

September 4, 2012 at 6:22 pm

Well even I have experienced the negative effects – not exactly due to the kriya but probably an already persistent condition which got aggravated by the kriya . All these magical stories of body healing , BP normalizing , Sugar within control , asthma cure , heart problems disappearing so on and so forth didnt happen to me at least. while I first did the kriya I got extremely scared and my whole body felt a feeling of numbness.. I have read in many hindu scriptures that if all these meditation techniques are not done under the able guidance of a guru , the whole brain could get affected as the kundalini force would be thrown into imbalance due to incorrect breathing.

. Since the experience was most traumatic , I left it after some time despite assurance from the AOL instructors to keep going. After that , I consulted a clinical psychiatrist and now after 2 years of medication ,extremely normal and living a fulfilling and contented life . I realize that in god's creation all 5 fingers are not the same , so AOL practitioners prescribing the same technique to all may not be in fact correct as it could trigger a mentally afflicted patient if not guided properly. And I believe there is no point in forcing the body against its wishes. The idea of coaxing one to continue despite feeling miserable was not correct on the part of the instructor .i dont blame her but she had been instructed to teach this way,

Also I believe strongly in Prarabdha and Karma. If you are bound to suffer you will suffer , You cant act against nature by these so called quick fix techniques to heal all kinds of diseases,. The best is Karma Yoga …Do your duty and the results will take care of itself . let us not get carried away by the so called magic techniques and end up in misery.

Reply

Ann

April 8, 2013 at 3:53 am

Thank you Parth for the extremely informative original post, especially the embedded video “Hyperventilation: Breathing Effects on Brain Oxygen and Health.” I have started doing heavy breathing as part of a kundalini class and have a limited interest in intentional hyperventilation. To be considered are the physical responses to blood gas levels that can be seen with diagnostic imaging, and varying capacities of individual bodies. As a healthcare provider I understand the sensations that hyperventilation generates as the body’s way of alerting of an imbalance.

Folks who become insulting or defensive when asked honest, respectful questions may just not be too far along a path of enlightenment — what are they afraid of? If there is a special technique to not hyperventilating when breathing heavier than the body requires, what would be the value of withholding that? Be wary of anyone who suggests you check your brain at the door!

To his credit, when I expressed my concern about hyperventilation to my kundalini class teacher, he simply encouraged me to not do something I was not comfortable with, which follows my understanding of ahimsa. During the heavy breathing exercises, I choose to focus on executing deep, complete, energetic breaths and releasing body tension while maintaining a breath rate that feels healthy to me, i.e., doesn’t make me feel light-headed.

Reply

alwin

April 28, 2014 at 6:37 pm

Sudarshan kriya is not hyperventilation, sk is a kundalini awakening technique…I m a practioner of sudarshan kriya since past 7 years ,..I started @18 discontinued in between…. the person with blog has discontinued practicing SK bcoz of fear and excessive doubt cultivated from outside(material world) 2wards sri sri and his teachings…..i went through your situation but never gave up my devotion towards god and guru(bcoz its written in vedas that guru does not lose anything if u start doubting him, its u who loses this eternal path)… ….your immune system should be absolutely strong if u do it 4 a longer period of time…. nervous system(mento emotional energy) goes through lot of changes after practising yogic practices along with bhakti (satsang) and (selfless service)……..and if your immune system is not strong, ur health will be in disorder, …take ayurvedic medicines and panchkarma for getting rid of disorder u have stated….. please read vedas upanishads esp yogasutra and many others which describe in detail guru-disciple relationship and many more…nobody can decide 4 your life except youself…this is a precious gift from 'ur self' dont throw it away like use and throw material….I even know this comment wont work on you bcoz this material world and its influences r so strong u have no idea

Reply

Arun *says:*

January 9, 2012 at 7:59 pm

Namsthe Guruji,

Thank you for the wonderful article! I stumbled upon this blog by chance today. I practised SK quite a few times (not regularly). I was confused about its authenticity as I have been about a lot of spiritual matters and gurus (but never of our scriptures or teachings). When I was doing the course and I started the SK on second day and my body got severely cramped leading me stop the SK in the middle of it. The teacher herself was perplexed. She came back to me after consulting someone else about this and told me this is because there was a lot of bad karma etc etc from a previous janma and asked me to continue it and the cramps would reduce with time!!!!! That`s when I just went back to being the agnostic that I have always been.

You have mentioned about `nadishodan`. Could you place tell me a good place to start practising this? I am a student living abroad and have no access to a school and would be grateful if you could provide some online resources.

Finally, I am no one to comment but, I know that there will be a lot of ignorant people who will stumble upon this blog (like me) from time to time and question several things. I understand that it might be irritable to hear from someone who does not anything about a topic. After all, all it takes to comment is a keyboard! But could you please be more patient and answer those questions in a more direct and sweet manner than you already are. I say this, only because, this way it might help to enlighten more people (again...like me) and guide them in a right way rather than they turn away for good.

I would like to thank you for making this material available and I will be a regular here from now.

With best regards and respect,

Arun

Reply

#5.25

AndySriSri • 1d ago

I have an exact experience which resonates with you. AOL teachers recommended me to take Marma treatment, Shirodhara, alkaline diet, more water (balance out the air element domination in your body).

The knowledge of kundalini awakening is greatly underplayed within the AOL family (my experience). But there are very trained senior teachers who can really help. I was lucky to get access to some senior teachers due to which I am alive and sane.

Kundalini awakening (if that is what is causing the issues to you) is really unique to each individual and sometimes more disastrous if not addressed properly. So the approach I would advise is not stick only with AOL and listen to yourself. I personally stopped all spiritual practices (that was the advice of AOL teacher as well) that helped me to stabilise. Eating meat can help! (Try if you think you are going crazy and people are moving from you because of your behaviours!)

Take medical help! Make sure too much blood do not flow into your brain which incapacitates the nerves!

The help is there within AOL family. You have to knock the right door. It is a maze! (It is like there are so many doctors but only few are really know their stuff).

There is lot of help in Kundalini forums but I would not advice as they can easily mislead and scare the hell out of you and make you super anxious.

Take it easy! It is a passing cloud!

Pray that the blocks are removed and your being becomes serene, calm and clean.

Good luck!

#5.26

Sharat PERMALINK

December 4, 2011 6:05 am

Hello Akshita- Thanks for sharinng your experience. I will take it that your experience as genuine. I had done AOL Basic course. I must say I have gained immensely from this program. It would have been better if SK also had worked for me. I developed mild but irritating pain on the right hand side of the right leg mostly from lower leg RHS to feet. Before practicng SK I had not experienced this pain. It is not a lingering pain only occurs occassionally, but can be irritating enough to not let me sleep. If I walk instead of sitting or sleeping, the pain goes away. It returns as soon as I try to sit or sleep. Like you, I had initially failed to connect SK to this pain. But after I suspected of it and stopped SK, the occurence of this pain reduced considerably and would recur if I do SK again. My feeling is that, I proobably had some problem at that area of the body for long, but became obvious after practicing SK. I had done a Nerve conuction test (EMG), but did not find any problem there and the doctors I have shown to are clueless about the reason and remedy for this. Has any of you are familiar with this problem I am talking about. I sould welcome anny suggestions you may have on this.

#5.27

@easylife12345 2 years ago

@saurabhpruthi29 ravi Shankar is a fraud n dangerous man. Art of living is worlds most fraud organization that's how he made millions of rupees by doing black magic on innocent people. After doing sudarshan kriya my whole body went into paralysis n the worst part is I paid for ravis shit. Imagine paying to buy a chakka shit

Show less

C

@chetnak112 1 year ago

Dear people don't worry about this comment....I have seen before this person's name on one of most viewed video..where he/she has commented such stupid thing about gurudev....I guess he is some kind of hater....so let's ignore all...as gurudev says just do good and move on...jai gurudev

Show less

@easylife12345 1 year ago (edited)

@chetnak112 jab khud pe beetigi tab pata chalega. I too was a staunch devotee like you. N I was art of living teacher

See original (Translated by Google)

#5.28

Hitesh

September 19, 2014 at 1:31 pm

I too feel the same sensation / tingling in my right arm. I asked the teacher but they just ignored it.
After stopping the Kriya I felt normal as usual.

Reply

Rockstar

May 31, 2015 at 10:15 am

I joined AOL a week back. I am feeling lightness in the backside of my head. I had lot of pain in my legs..a cramp sort of thing while doing the SK. The teacher told that it is perfectly normal so I went on doing it. After reading the blogs, I feel that in long run SK will become part of the body-mind balace and would be impossible to leave it in between without having severe side effects.

Pls guide. Moreover the teacher seema to be Parrot who are in great love with Guru jee.

Onething is for sure, SK is not for everyone. Stop preaching like it is solution for all problems. Donot go for advance course it you are facing the problem thinking that it takeaway the bad feeling.
Regarda
Rock

Reply

Ramaswamy *says:*

December 21, 2016 at 2:25 pm

Dear Acharya,
I was suffering a lot from sleep problems and dizziness and on a whim one day I did Kapaal Bhati and anulom vilom and that night I got great sleep. This was the case for the next 5 days. 6th day, I got food poisoning and my sleep became bad again. This was in 2011. I still continued Kapaal Bhati and anulom vilom though I got not much benefit from it. Then in 2012, my dizziness got resolved on its own and over a period of another 3 months, with homeopathy, my sleep problems also got resolved. I started doing Sudarshan Kriya around June 2012 and since then, I started getting instant sleep(earlier, it would take me about 30-45 minutes to fall asleep after going to bed). Around Dec 2012, I developed a pain in my left foot which was diagnosed as flat foot and I did some excercises for strengthening the arches and the pain was not too high. Then in April 2013, I started climbing stairs in order to get excercise and used to climb 7 floors 3 times a day. Around June 2015, my right knee started getting some pain and I stopped climbing stairs and avoided putting strain on my legs by avoiding unnecessary stairs climbing. The pain was there in my right knee, but very mild and orthopaedics only advised excercise.
Around June 2016, I got a food poisoning and after about 2 weeks, my stomach settled, but I got severe dizziness. My left foot pain and right knee pain were pretty much same and nothing much changed in that regard. In Aug 2016, my right ear felt full and started giving a whistling sound and after that, my sleep went bad and till now it is not back to normal. Around Sep 2016, my left knee also started having similar pain as my right knee. Since Oct 2016, I have stopped sitting in Vajrasan while doing sudarshan kriya in order to avoid any strain on my legs. Now since the last two months, my calf muscles are feeling tight in both my legs and last 3-4 days it is much worse. Is this due to the pranayam? I do not want to stop the sudarshan kriya and kapal bhati and anulom vilom since I did get some decent benefits out of them initially and probably due to that I did not think that the pain in my left heel could be because of it. But if they are going to make things worse for my legs, I think I should stop them. Need your kind advice regarding the same

thanks,

Just a note: My dizziness is still present, but much less than august and my ear is still feeling full and making whistling sound 24X7. My sleep is still not good enough(4.5 to 5 hours)

Reply

#5.31

captajitvadakayil.in/2021/02/02/sanatana-dharma-hinduism-exhumed-and-resurrected-part-92-...

MY WIFE ATTENDED SRI SRI RAVISHANKARs ART OF LIVING COURSE ON MY INSTRUCTIONS

I TOLD HER TO DO EXACTLY WHAT THE COURSE TEACHER (A WOMAN) TOLD HER – NOTHING MORE NOTHING LESS

I WARNED HER –AS SOON AS HER BRAIN CELLS STARTS GETTING FRIED , SHE WILL FEEL HER BODY EXTREMITIES TINGLING FIRST AND THEN VIBRATING LIKE MAD .. SHE FELT IT SO MUCH , THAT SHE HAD TO TUCK HER ARMS AND FEET WITHIN HER BODY. SHE KNEW WHAT WAS COMING — FOR I HAD TOLD HER ABOUT CARPOPEDAL SPASMS .

SO HUM type hyperventilation (forced overbreathing) causes symptoms of hypocapnia such as tingling, light-headedness or dizziness

The AOL course LIES that tingling, vibrations and spasms is the sign of prana moving towards their fingertips and feet. Don't accept the standard Art of Living response that you are detoxing, but rather listen to your body.

DETOX AND PRANA THINGY BY SOHUM IS A TERRIFIC LIE

Thousands of people who practiced Sudarshan Kriya all over the planet actually found that their health deteriorated considerably.

After seeking medical advice and being told to stop their practice, it was only then did that their health began to improve again.

Many who have stopped practicing Sudarshan Kriya have also reported improvements in memory, concentration and energy levels, which ironically are the very things which Art of Living claims Sudarshan Kriya can help with

SRI SRI RAVISHANKAR DOES NOT REPRESENT HINDUISM OR INDIA .

#5.32

r/Meditation • 3 mo. ago
pranavi8

Confused with AOL - Sudarshan kriya experience

Question ❓

I recently attended Art of living (AOL) Happiness program & My experience with Sudarshan kriya has bee..... different. Honestly I'm confused with what I felt. While doing sudarshan kriya - my body felt paralysed, my face muscles got tightened up, my fingers literally got stiffened up mainly my ring & little finger, had an intense head ache, my feet got numb. Was totally scared of that experience. I shared my experience with the instructor - where he said not to analyse much , seems he got bit pissed off & said it's my call to continue or not. It was high on 1st day, then day 2&3 it reduced a bit. I had to take a 2 day break because of travelling and started again today - I felt the same sensations again. I don't know why , do i need to continue it? I'm not sure what's happening or why my body's responding this way. Did anyone experienced the same ? What's the cause of this and what we need to do?

Update: I have Asthma

"When energy rises too quickly, it can bewilder the body.
Each description here points to the same truth:
Kundalini awakening demands stability and most importantly informed consent.
Grounding, rest, and supervision turn chaos into insight"

Reported Adverse Effects Domain 6- Fainting or Loss of Consciousness

SUMMARY OF ADVERSE REACTIONS AND SIDE EFFECTS

ACTUAL LIST OF ADVERSE SYMPTOMS REPORTED IN ONLINE REVIEWS AND COMMENTS:
FAINTING, UNCONSCIOUSNESS

NUMBER OF CASES REPORTED:
AT LEAST 14 FOUND ON INTERNET. THERE ARE MORE SUSPECTED TO BE OFFLINE OR UNREPORTED ON INTERNET

INSTANCES OF ADVERSE REACTIONS AND SIDE EFFECTS REPORTED ONLINE

#6.1

stupidseeker PERMALINK
July 30, 2011 6:57 am

My sister during her initiation into the SKY lost consciousness during the rapid breathing cycle, right in front of the teachers eyes. She was unconscious for about five minutes before she revived while the teacher looked on, telling everybody it was the beneficial effect of the kriya. Later she told us about feeling lightheaded and seeing “lights” before she passed out.
She never did the kriya even once after that evening class which took place about sixteen yrs back.

#6.2

anon PERMALINK
March 3, 2011 11:56 am

i was a teacher. i have had a student pass out during sk. as adviced by aol, i made her smell the flowers that are offered to ravi’s picture. this is said to revive them. it did not happen. then as instructed, i placed a shawl that ravi had given me, as that is also divine, since ravi had been wearing it all day, before giving it to me. i was relatively new teacher at that time….i was told not to panic as grace will work it’s magic (cant imagine that i was that dumb). anyway, we did all that and the student never came around. almost an hour later, she stirred and finally got up. i did have to call the doctor, who arrived after she had woken up. that incident really freaked me out. this was the severeist incident, with many smaller ones, which had people react abnormally. this was all karma clearing. so i do not beleive sk i for evetone.

REPLY

#6.3, 6.4

anonymous PERMALINK

March 28, 2011 4:25 pm

Actually, HHSSRS told me himself that someone (who will go unnamed here for fear of lawsuit) did die during the course, when HHSSRS was present. He told me that he brought this person back to life, and that the person is eternally grateful. He said that this person died of heart failure during the SK. Also, once when I was participating in a "Maha" Kriya, a man in the group lost consciousness. I opened my eyes to see many people hovering over this man, including HHSSRS, and the man was brought to another part of the room. Afterwards, again, HHSSRS told me personally that the man had died of heart attack, and because he, HHSSRS was present, he was alive, as he revived him. Otherwise, he told me, the man would have stayed dead.

#6.5, 6.6

Anonymous PERMALINK

June 12, 2012 3:30 pm

@ Anon june 12 2012 5:36 am — "I know of another incident where a person died while doing 'om shake' during an advance course with dinesh"

This does not surprise me. I've seen people fall unconscious, and turn blue. Ravi Shankar himself brags that one of his senior teachers (now left from AOL, good for him) died during the SK, and that he, RS, brought him back to life.

It's a matter of time before someone sues big time and this whole things crumbles.

Anonymous PERMALINK

June 13, 2012 12:23 pm

@Doreen I don't feel a need to apologize for saying this: I did SK and taught it (unfortunately) to many people. It made me ill on many occasions and I never received an acceptable answer from your Guruji as to why, only that I didn't need to do SK, just teach it to others. When I taught, on more than one occasion, people, whose health I had reviewed and seemed fine, by AOL 'standards', became very ill, even unconscious, and it was quite frightening, as I am not a doctor. I even saw someone pass out when Guruji was teaching, and he looked very upset and kept touching the person with fear in his eyes. The person did wake up finally, but I really thought he would die. SK is not safe for everyone. Many people are affected adversely by it. It hurts people. It should be taught very carefully (if at all) in small groups, in extremely clean air (like the mountains) by well-trained teachers. The emphasis to get the numbers must be dropped if AOL is to stop harming innocent people. My experience with Ravi Shankar was that he just didn't care except for the large numbers.

anonymous PERMALINK

July 22, 2011 1:12 pm

Dear "Doctor",

Thank you for this post in it's detail. I am not a doctor. All I can report is what I've seen as an ex-teacher, and what SSRS told me himself about the effects of the Kriya:

I have personally had someone lose consciousness during a course, and turn grey. I was alarmed, and didn't know what to do, as the instruction was to remember SSRS, and say a particular phrase into the person's ear. I did that, not feeling totally confident, as the person looked dead and had stopped breathing. It was terrifying. After some time, this person did regain consciousness, and reported having seen a bright white light, and was attracted to it and then decided against it, and then slowly realized being in a course, etc. (The whispering of the particular phrase, by the way did not restore the consciousness — nothing happened for several minutes.) That was one of the last courses I taught because I was afraid of harming anyone, and told SSRS this as well later on. He said that his Grace had saved the life. He then went on to tell me that a senior teacher at that time(whom I believe has also left the organization now) had actually died while doing the Kriya, and, according to SSRS's own words to me, was 'brought back to life' by him (SSRS). This was even more alarming to me. I asked him what if that happened and he was not there? What could be done? When I did teach after this, I was sure to emphasize that people should not breathe at all forcefully, and to be certain, no matter the size of the gathering, that I watched to see if anyone began doing intense breathing, and then would quietly tell them to breath 'softly'. I just didn't want anyone to die! I also witnessed someone during a "MahaKriya" collapse, and SSRS first sent other teachers over to the person, and then he himself stood over the person looking very concerned and helpless. That was it for me — no more teaching. The person did recover, but was aided by a medical doctor.

Again, I am not a doctor. But I don't need to be a doctor to know that these incidents could not be so rare, given the number of people being taught worldwide. If SSRS himself had someone die, then who else has had a close call and just didn't see it, or report it or is hiding it? We'll probably never know. I only know my own scary experiences and the very scary story told to me by SSRS himself.

#6.11

Dr. King, Swami Satyapriya · Following
Author of 30+ books (see tinyurl.com/mybooks1234) · 1h

Do you know of any cases where a person was reported to have died or developed complicated health issues or mental health ailments after practicing yoga, breathwork, or any Kriya, or pranayama? If yes, can you share what the person practiced?

I knew a highly qualified doctor (he is no more) who once told me about his experience practicing Sudarshana Kriya of AOL. I have nothing against AOL nor I have ever done their practices. So, it is a totally an unbiased report.

This doctor, who had lot of interest in spiritual practices, was once dragged to AOL conducted Sudarshana Kriya class. What he told me was that it can be quite a dangerous practice for some people since it can induce **hyper ventilation**. It can even result in fatality. When he said that, I could see this doctor's face becoming pale with shock. He also said that he had to drop from the class since he had problems.

He also felt that due to lack of Carbon dioxide supply to the brain (some amount of it needed for proper brain function and hyper ventilation depletes it), the person who practices may feel a certain 'high' which often gets interpreted as 'spiritual experience' - which it is not.

I later discussed this with a friend of mine who was very active in AOL. He said AOL is aware of this possibility, and normally the teachers advise caution when one practices it. It is not meant for everyone.

#6.12

Hi!
Thanks AD for having posted this article. I was looking for answers about SK as I recently did a 3 day short course on it. The second day I had a strong fainting feeling after I completed the Kriya and had to sit up. I also felt negative and low all evening. The third day was a lil depressed. I stopped the kriya and started it after a few days. I started to feel depressed and negative all over again. I also got impatient and nasty at times. I felt like crying in the evenings. I do drink over 2 litres of water a day which they say is necessary while one practices. I am in a worse kind of state and after the kriya my hand shivers for a good 5 minutes. After reading your article I am glad am not the only one. Was a big mistake to have done the Art of Living course. It didnt work for me.

God Bless you

Newbie

teteawit@yahoo.com

#6.13

Ram *says:*
April 7, 2023 at 10:31 am

I had terrible experience after practising SKY for a month.
Earlier last month, I was on a break from work. Given the free time and my mind mentally exhausted from Job burnout and other stressors in life I decided to give SKY a try. I did the weekend course and everything looked fine, I thought I will commit to it for the 40 days they want you to and see.

The first day I did it, I was feeling very much on the edge. I was feeling happy but I was also feeling very "eager" to do stuff. I think I got some energy / kick out of it and I started doing some things. But in a couple of days, while the happy feeling was there, I could my body was dehydrated – I was feeling extremely thirsty. I drank and drank lots of water. Within a week or so, I didn't feel the need to exercise – I thought that was strange! I thought, may be my body was rejuvenated so I probably did not need the exercise. In about a week to 10 days – I noticed that my eyesight had become week. Yes, my eyesight – and it was definitely due to my mind being tired from the effects of SKY. I believe it was due to lack of Oxygen.

Anyway, 2-3 weeks later I caught Covid. I continued doing it in Covid for a couple of days. Then one not so fine morning, I could not sleep the night before very well, I woke with a sore throat and wanted to rush to the bathroom. Next thing I know I FAINTED!! I banged my head on the bathroom counter and injured my eye, my jaw, teeth etc. I ran to the ER to get treatment. They treated and told me to drink lots of water – NOW that is when I realized the thirst I had felt before long before had caught up to me. Also the mental exhaustion that SKY practice was causing – all of those culminated in me Fainting.

Few days later while recovering from Covid, I tried doing the practice again. This time I did it very mildly. But oh boy that same evening and the next few days (today included) – I felt like I would fall and pass out again. I am not doing Sudarshan or any such kriya ever again. Hyperventilation is real – such deep heavy breathing causes the brain to get strained and get less oxygen.

I had tried Sadhguru's Shambhavi a few years ago and I had to stop it as I did not feel it effective at all. The fast breathing component in it as well was not working for me.

I thought I would give Sudarshan kriya a try after all these years but oh boy – this is worse.

I will stick to my practice of Anulom vilom – I think it's the best Pranayama for most people (for me anyways).

Thank you for posting this article. I will try to share my experience with as many folks as possible.

Wish everyone well.

Reply

#6.14

Hello sir,
i am having the same issues as asked by the questioner...i want to know that can i take ashwagandharisht in place of the brahmi herb..and if yes then for how long. thank you.

Amit chauhan
amitchauhan1234@gmail.com

"Fainting is the body's emergency whisper - its plea for oxygen and balance.
The testimonies shared recount such moments of sudden surrender.
Passing out during practice is never a sign of progress. It is a message to pause, hydrate, and seek evaluation. Awareness of limits safeguards both faith and life"

Reported Adverse Effects Domain 7- Mental Health

SUMMARY OF ADVERSE REACTIONS AND SIDE EFFECTS

ACTUAL LIST OF ADVERSE SYMPTOMS REPORTED IN ONLINE REVIEWS AND COMMENTS:

TRIGGERING/INDUCING/WORSENING OF DEPRESSION, ANXIETY, DISSOCIATION, PANIC ATTACKS, OCD FLARE UP, PTSD, RETRAUMATIZATION, CPTSD, SCHIZOPHRENIA, BIPOLAR DISORDER, SUICIDAL THOUGHTS & TENDENCY, COMPLETED SUICIDES

NUMBER OF CASES REPORTED:

AT LEAST 50 FOUND ON INTERNET. THERE ARE MORE SUSPECTED TO BE OFFLINE OR UNREPORTED ON INTERNET

INSTANCES OF ADVERSE REACTIONS AND SIDE EFFECTS REPORTED ONLINE

#7.1

asktell22 • 5mo ago

I finished my 3 day party 1 yesterday. I'm falling deeper into depression. I did it today on my own and I'm so depressed. I do have energy though, but I'm suicidal.

4 Reply Award Share ...

#7.2

Shari

May 16, 2017 at 12:43 am

THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR THIS POST – I EXPERIENCED SIMILAR THINGS

When I was 13 I took art of living classes to help me cope with stress at school and it opened up my third eye and really screwed me up. I had so many negative reactions – visions, low blood pressure, tingles, anxiety, depression that I eventually had a nervous breakdown and ended up in hospital.

It has taken me years to recover.

Anyway it's amazing that art of livingis wrapped in all this good publicity and no one talks about the dangers of the practice. Especially for untrained beginners.

I suffered from severe psychic trauma as a result.

Anyway thank you for so bravely sharing truth. I do not believe the practices are bad but maybe they were meant for more advanced yogis with more training and practice behind them.

Thank you so much for your blogs.

Reply

#7.3

I did sudarshan kriya for four years. After that I've caught some mental problems. I started feeling sad and depressed. I've consulted to psychiatrist and I've diagnosed with bipolar disorder.Generally it's an issue related to Mood swings. Now I stopped doing sudarshan kriya. Slowly and steadily I'am recovering but it seems like it already ...

#7.4

r/Ex_ArtOfLiving • 7 mo. ago
Actual-Dealer8563

Panic attack during first day of happiness course

Hi, please help. I'm at Bangalore ashram for happiness course. 22F, student. I hate to meditate in general and have social media addiction and certain recent traumatic events which has caused anxiety and frequent breakdowns. While doing guided bhastrika and other medications in the first day of happiness course i had a scary panic attack for which i ran out to catch a break and cried a lot. Is this rare? Should i not continue this? I didn't go to my 2nd day of course and my didn't feel like stepping out of my room. So I didn't step out to even eat and remained hungry till night when i had dinner because of the painful starvation. Tomorrow is the last day, should i go or not? I hate meditation , or am i just lazy? Is crying because of meditation normal?

#7.5

Princesspoi84 • 20d ago

its not stated anywhere, and when brought up in class setting they ignore and blatantly deny that these contraindications exist. When I have been diagnosed with CPTSD for almost 15 years now, but living with it for 25, and understand that Bhastrika and Khalabati breath is very activating.... and anyone that has studied breath work knows that with mental health some of these techniques can make the condition worse, or even lead to serious health compliactions in the cases of high blood pressure, and heart disease.... The fact that a student can raise a question about these concerns in the Happiness course, and then daily during their stay, and they are fed LIES that because its a KRIYA (which it ISNT, I don't know why they call it that its a multiple breathworks done in order that doesn't make it a KRIYA) but they use that as a justification as to why this doesn't have contraindications, and that is total disinformation. and then they double down and say that it actually cures all ailments. and its not jsut some teachers teaching it this way. this is a systemic problem within the organization that they are passing down to teach it this way and purposefully withholding information to keep people safe

#7.6

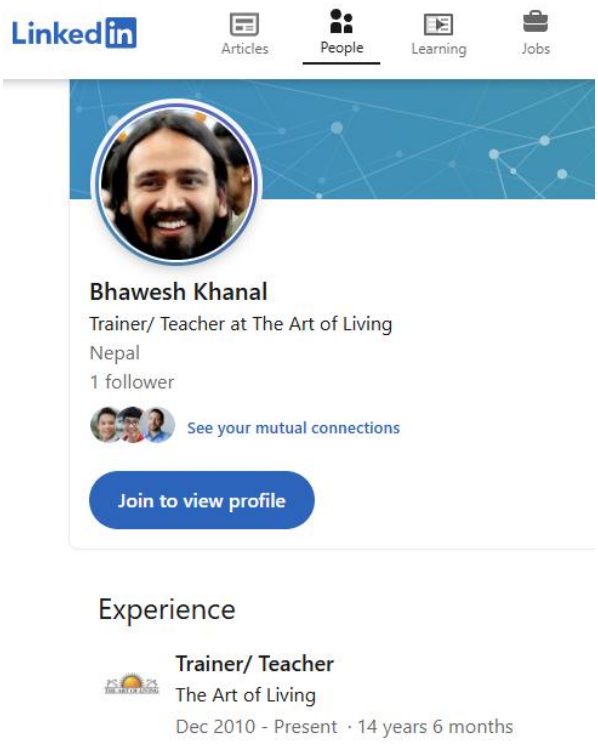
Anonymous
6y

Hi. Not here to hurt anyone's beliefs or sentiments. But i would like to tell a story before coming to the answer. There was a time in my life that everyone started blaming me for angry behaviour. Suddenly one day i saw a friend of mine in college who seemed very peaceful. I asked him how did you became so peaceful. He said i participated into aol course. So i signed up for the course. I did all the things which were told in the course. But no change within me. Later i redid the same course. This time teacher were more kinder than the previous. During 2nd attempt i had an experience of crying during the kriya process. Still remember that moment somehow. And my behaviour started changing. Some days after, i started hearing different multiple voices in mind. Was admitted to psychiatric hospital near by, where i was diagnosed with schizophrenia. One day me and my parents visited the teacher and told them about this. The teacher gave explanation like this 'if somebody has a sugar and he eats sugar though he does not know he has a sugar, then is it our fault?'. We were totally devastated by this.

Just want to say that before doing any of the courses of any of the organisations, trust yourself that no matter what negative your family, friends, or outside people say, you have to stay positive.

29K views · View 40 upvotes · View 1 share

#7.7



Bhawesh sir was an Art of Living teacher. He taught YES+ and Happiness courses. Some courses were massive; as big as 500 people in a single session. He was a role model for young generation. He then found his own organization 'Human Values for Peace and Prosperity' for a time being and returned to be Art of Living teacher again. There were lots of turnings in his life. One of his biggest projects was the formation of the largest human flag at Tundikhel as an attempt to Guinness book of world records. He had a vision, was skillful, enthusiastic, committed and always worked with determination. As a brother and student, I at all times wished for his wellness. I know all of us did.

Aashish Dhakal called me and told me that he passed away. I felt shattered. I was shocked when he told me that it was a suicide. Tears rolled down my eyes. I felt sad for days. A person as strong as Bhawesh Khanal could commit a suicide. I could not believe it. I talked with Aashish, Aayush, Avilasha, Amrit and others to calm myself. He should not have done it. He was a fighter. He had people in life. He was talented. I cannot stand in his shoes for what he went through, but I dearly miss him. I want someone to motivate me in life. I want my arguments to be hammered by factual reasons. I want somebody to pull me into path of spirituality. I wish I still had him in life. For a time being, I may have disliked some of his actions that I felt wrong, but I have always loved him. We all have.

Source: https://aolraj.wordpress.com/2019/05/23/we-love-you-bhawesh-da/

#7.8

PER

THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS

NATION WORLD STATES OPINIONS CITIES BUSINESS SPORT GOOD NEWS MOVIES PHOTOS

Bengaluru

30-yr-old housekeeper of Art of Living Ashram hangs self in Bengaluru

A complaint has been filled by Atul Purushotham, who is the house keeping in-charge at the ashram, and has been working there for the last 16 years.

#7.9

and brain, feeling void , emotions like guilt, remorse etc . I've completely stopped from day 4 - they keep on insisting me to continue even tho I was tryna rest but i didn't go , today is the 5th day and the symptoms are same , now they r not claiming the demerits of it , they've been blaming it on winter season & that "toxins are leaving my body by sky" even tho my intuition is saying that if i would've continued my soul would've left my body . I consulted my family dr and taking medicines , hope i heal soon .... Feeling nervous...

Thank you so much for bringing this topic up !

Ppl should be aware of both pros & cons as it solely depends upon person to person

Keep making ❤️

Lots of love

#7.10

Extra-Grape9967 · 4h ago
There was a dynamic volunteer in Central Maharashtra 10 years ago. Used to put a lot of efforts for seva at times neglecting his studies. Was a favorite amongst some senior teachers too. He suddenly committed suicide and nobody batted any eye. It felt like everyone ignored it like a bad chapter and closed off.

#7.11

Yogi · 5y
Jai Gurudev,

I had opened up my eyes during the first long kriya in yes!+ Program and I feel that I've lost the balance within me and the focus since then...How to recover from it?

Regards,

Deepti

#7.12

Paresh · 3y
I agree..after i did sudarshan kriya I couldnt drive after evening for several years...i felt disassociated with my body..like out of body experience....and yeah brain fog...dullness... no alertness , sharpness and wit like i used to have earlier....

#7.13

Vishal Gaba · 3y
Art of living n sudarshan kriya is very dangerous and a mad organization.. people have become mad n have lost their royalty.. he asks u to beg on road with ur face covered in mud called buddha process, he makes u share ur sexual experiences in a group, he asks u to go on road and say I am mad . It is a very dangerous organization started by a mad man called sri sri.. all aolites are mad people. Doing sudarshan kriya can invite all dead spirits and bhoots in your system. And infact it may lead u in a mental asylum..people beware...I have got half mad ever since I did his kriya. I lost my career, my mind, my money, my health to this joker asshole. Save our family from this .

#7.14

Jas Sandhu · 1y
I been doing surdarshan Kirya since 2004 and meditation it was really nice feeling but then I started to get angry for no reason even little things would make me angry then I researched and found out that it could be the kirya my meditation teacher said to stop doing kirya and see I been feeling so great with just meditation I feel so calm.it is a business no offence to anyone it's only my opinion and experience.Namaste

#7.15

pashminajethwani 1

India

2 Reviews

Evil spirits attack nd black magic by ravishankar

★☆☆☆☆ Apr 14, 2023 09:04 PM 8197 Views (via Mobile)

It has been twelve years tht we hve not been able to sleep properly because of art of living ravishankar nd black magic performed by ravishankar nd disciples on me nd my family his favourite teacher Dr Sangeeta saxena dis upri hawa

Like 2 Comments 1 Share Reply As Brand

#7.16

Umesh Singh · 1y

I feel this at initially stage...so I do not take any risk ..bcoz I suffered a lot...after doing this I feel so good but someone shout at you n disturb to u, u get disturbed completely...

#7.17

Neha Patil Rane · 1y

I agree with your write-up. It is the most dangerous technique i found. Just ended the course in between. I was not aware of sudarshan kriya techniques and opted an offline course to get guided meditation but instead I ended up flairing my anxiety and ocd which was under control since long. But when I asked for help from the teacher, he insisted to not stop it. I was severely dehydrated and was not able to sleep at night from second day of course itself and got up from sleep every 2 hours at night with racing heart.

#7.18

Bhuvaneshwar Annaladasula · 5y

Same thing happened to me taking medicine now,can I get your number.

#7.19

Naveen Pandey · Mar 26

You are not alone. I read a experience of someone in US who was following the Art of Living since 1998 and left after doing the DSN course. They had repeated panic attacks.

> In the interest of saving space (I can go into more detail if wished), DSN left me with several negative experiences. It really is training to peddle AoL and to raise money. The teacher was exceptionally good at patter and there was a lot of sleep deprivation. Due to the stress involved I did end up having several panic attacks, mostly out when I was trying to convince people to sign up for a course. A senior Atlanta teacher noticed the one that I did have in the venue and she took me out of there to calm me down. There were several processes that were helpful to me but on the whole it was an exhausting and weird experience.
>
> After this experience I started doing the Kriya full-time and took a few other courses, Yes+, several special satsangs, knowledge series, etc. I figured that I needed to delve into the sadhana more to overcome the fear issues. After about two years of this all I really noticed was that my panic attacks were increasing and my head was getting more and more foggy. My short-term memory was getting worse. So I did research on Google and found this blog, and I've started cutting my ties.
>
> I have left the Art of Living organization and I'm doing self-study to see which of the practices and knowledge points are worth preserving as I move forward on my own. I am of the opinion that while the organization is corrupt and some of the practices are dangerous there have been enough legitimate good teachings from it (or cribbed) that I can't immediately throw out the whole thing.

#7.20

Chander Kant KUK said...

I was Suffering from Insomnia and by Sudarshak Kriya. I got Dipression also and Loss of mental State which I improve in very Difficult way by doing Anulom-Vilom and other Pranayam. Sudarshan Kriya is Like a Kriya-Karam of a Person. A Person mind can upset anytime and may not recover....Dr. Chander Kant, Professor, K.U. Kurukshetra

JULY 22, 2010 AT 11:07 PM

IMPORTANT TO NOTE – LONG SUDARSHAN KRIYA CAN BE HARMFUL IF OVERDONE OR DONE TOO INTENSELY

Jay Thuse · Following
Studied at Studying Electronics & Communication Engineering · 7y

Related **How many times a week I can do full Sudarshan Kriya in follow up sessions? Is there any side effect if I do it 4 to 5 times a week?**

Long(full) Sudarshan Kriya shouldn't be done so frequently, as you are doing.

Overdoing the long Sudarshan Kriya may cause increased levels of anxiety, and other problems in your body.

I was overdoing the long Kriya once, and I did feel increased anxiety levels. I had a talk with our follow up session teacher about this, and he told me that **long Sudarshan Kriya should be done only once in a week, i.e. at the time of follow up sessions at your near by Art Of Living follow up centre, and that too under the observation and guidance of your teacher. Also, he specifically instructed me, that you alone shouldn't do the long Sudarshan Kriya all by yourself.**

It is because, only the teachers are trained to teach people, the great Sudarshan Kriya, and also to handle the people who do Sudarshan Kriya, if anything goes wrong.

For the days of week, except the follow up session day, you can do the short version of Sudarshan Kriya, every day and all by yourself, without any problem.

I consider myself so greatly blessed that, I'm writing this answer on the topic of Sudarshan Kriya today, on 13th May, which is the birth day of the great man who gave us the Sudarshan Kriya. Its none other than, our beloved Sri Sri Ravi Shankar Ji.

#7.21

Jo said...

Very nice thoughts Abhishek. I wrote about something similar in my blog.

I have a friend who attended Art of Living course and who's gone insane now. He said practising the Sudharsana Kriya over the allowed time can be like taking drugs and now he is a psychic patient and taking medicines for that. His doc advised that he shouldn't follow any Gurus for happiness, but try to follow his own duties as a man to be happy. :-)

10:11 PM

#7.22

Upward SELF · Feb 28

This is so dangerous to tell people. This is a prime example of the tactics being used. To tell people that they should suffer and keep doing the kriya even though it doesn't resonate in the body is dangerous. This breathwork has so many contraindications, and for people that have any kind of PTSD or Anxiety, heart issues, strokes, mental illness should absolutely consult a Dr and they may want to research the pranayama this organization patented by calling it a kriya. It's a pranayama and a potent one.

I was pressured exactly like this by one of my friends, while I was at the art of living, and this is disturbing how you put this hertz telling your story of sitting with the breathwork for a long period of time through the suffering is almost like that's what they teach you to tell people that the breath work doesn't resonate for.

This is really dangerous.

Anonymous PERMALINK

June 12, 2012 3:37 pm

Many teachers exhibit types of mania, becoming extremely fast talking, overly happy, bubbling, frenetic. They recruit like crazy! Then, if you know them personally, you can see them 'crash', and go into various stages of depression, in private with acquaintances or friends. I believe these extreme mood swings are produced from the practices, SK, and association with Ravi Shankar. I noticed my moods becoming very pronounced, swinging from 'high' to 'low', and knew this could not be healthy. Unfortunately, some people like the 'high' too much, like a drug, so they continuously seek out RS and the SK to try to reproduce it again and again, regardless of the low that occurs later. I have never seen a balanced Art of Living teacher, calm, quiet, introspective, with good energy, who exhibited those traits most or all of the time. I only saw extremes of behaviors and a little in-between sometimes. To me, it felt not like growth, to see people and to participate in the running after the guru, and seva, etc., but rather like being some kind of addict. Anyone who wants a truly peaceful life will probably avoid AOL once they see beyond just one or two satsangs. It's not a peaceful existence at all.

#7.24

Dr Sudheendra PERMALINK

March 5, 2011 5:30 am

All the three rhythms in SK – long, medium and short causes hyperventilation because it is done continously without pause. Same happens in rebirthing breathing from where ravi got this idea. The symptoms of hyperventilation can be easily observed in SK practise. I could see it in myself, my family and some of friends who practised this. I have seen one lady friend of mine a long term practitioner of SK being constantly spaced out, hysterical and with continous mood swings. She was normal before SK and now a big votary of the efficacy of this technique but she couldnt see her own condition which was so obvious for everyone else. She was like a drug addict looking for her next high in her SK practise.

#7.25

Adyut, May 25, 2012 9:39 pm

Side note : When I was an active volunteer I would recruit many of my colleagues in the office. I remember one colleague that developed some major crazy symptoms while doing SK. My colleague had not declared on their form that they were once taking medication for bi-polar activity. The sickness post SK caused them to take leave of absence for many weeks. My colleague's boss, a foreign national then called me to directly check how qualified I was to even talk about such a subject and recruit people for a unproven program. He wanted to know, how could I talk about stress, mental health, physical health and so on. He even called me a quack and warned me to stop my recruiting activity within the office. He was right. However, my life was filled with the Grace. I continued to recruit. Then I became a teacher. Then I started to teach it.

What is interesting is the following. My own body started to reject SK within a year of me becoming a teacher. I was in a interesting quandary. I was teaching the stuff, but could not do it myself. That was hypocritical. I continued to teach though. The other good things far outweighed the few uncomfortable things I felt. I realise now, that maybe I was very very lucky and I still had some sanity intact at that time, that I managed to actually respect what my body was telling me and to not be guilty about not STAYING with the popular hype (There is nothing beyond SK, which I was also selling heavily at that time).

I remember, I sometimes had some pretty spiritually advanced people (those that had been working on themselves for very long periods.....in their own ways and were proficient in other paths). What I found strange at those times was that these people for most parts, did not have positive experiences with SK and would struggle to even finish the class.

anonymous PERMALINK

January 24, 2011 2:17 pm

Slightly Different Take:

A very knowledgeable yogi, whom I met at the ashram (he was visiting), observed the SK and later told me this:

He had not seen such unhealthy looking people as those doing the practices. He said that this type of breathing practice is indicated for those living in pristine, clean environments, such as the Himalayas, and living a particular, austere lifestyle, which no worldly people would be interested in living. Otherwise, he said, these SK would cause health problems of all sorts, in his opinion, and his observations of the group, he felt, supported his opinion. I stopped the SK after that conversation, and did leave AOL. My health improved immediately, slowly returning to normal after about a year of not doing SK.

#7.26

Anonymous PERMALINK

March 2, 2012 12:04 pm

Here are my observations: 2 people who were in AOL and did the practice regularly, developed asthma they never had before. 1 person reported doing SK and passing out, and said that others with them said they were having some kind of fit, shaking, etc. At least 3 people I can think of have said they had irregular heartbeat during and after the practice of SK and had not had it before. To me, this means that this practice should not be given in large groups without a doctor present, watching carefully. I believe the practice to be “okay” for some people and critically dangerous for many others. Of course people who had the above experiences would either stop SK immediately, or eventually put 2 and 2 together and realize the SK was harming them, and not do it anymore. It’s a dangerous practice. I knew at least 4 “senior teachers” who never did SK at all, even when they taught.

#7.27

Anonymous PERMALINK

June 12, 2012 5:36 am

In the blessing course i did under swami pragyapad, a lady turned violent after the 'roaring like a lion' process. She became so violent that she tore of the cushion that we use to sit in the vishalakshi mantap and the cotton was flying all over. I could not understand how one can tore a thick cushion with bare hands. She appeared as aggressive as a lion, shouting tearing. Later she regained her senses after a spell of unconsciouness. Then pragyapad had sent her out of the course, telling that she hid that much anger inside her. The lady pleaded him to allow her to continue with the course. But he refused.

I know of another incident where a person died while doing 'om shake' during an advance course with dinesh.

#7.28

dear brothers n sisters, I was at the peak of my career before doing sudarshan kriya .affter i got involved into aol.. i have been damaged badly .. he tortured me, my finances n he even wanted to kill me even i was doing free seva in his ashram... i was completely on road.. i have regular vomiting, loose motions because he told us if u leave me i will destroy u with his spiritual powers... these things are really harmful.. i have lost my career, my health.. it is very very very very dangerous.. i cant sleep , i cant walk straight,,, i have invited all dead spirits... please stop suadarshan kriya as soon as possible.

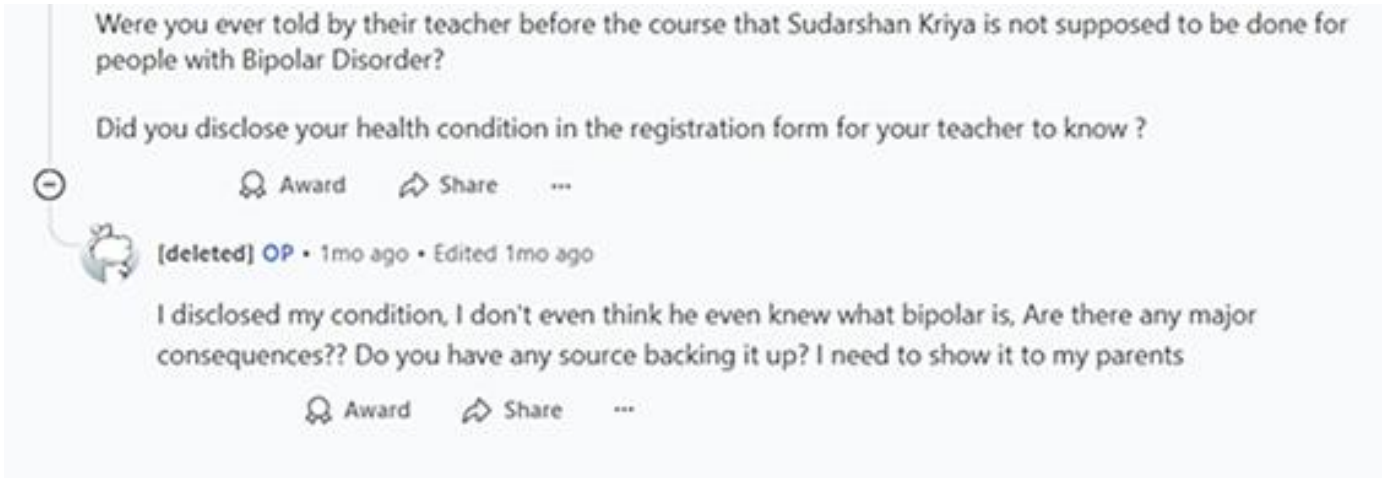
Show less

#7.29

Sir please help me i do sudershan kriya for 1 time I see very side effect like dull mind & loss of focuss no feelings & no thinking feeling like num sir what can I do please tell me any treatment ? I am suffering from cerebral palsy by birth and before doing sudershan kriya I am very active and currious about my dream I do only 1 time sir tell me the ..

2 Reply

#7.30


Were you ever told by their teacher before the course that Sudarshan Kriya is not supposed to be done for people with Bipolar Disorder?
Did you disclose your health condition in the registration form for your teacher to know ?
Award
Share
[deleted] OP • 1mo ago • Edited 1mo ago
I disclosed my condition, I don't even think he even knew what bipolar is, Are there any major consequences?? Do you have any source backing it up? I need to show it to my parents
Award
Share

#7.31

Wishnu101 said...

AOL harrasing the practioners:

Attended the AOL breathing training.Ravi Patak was the teacher that time.He said we have to follow
Ahimsa methods.He was sitting on a Silk saree.Asked him "you are sitting on killing of thosands of silkworms".He was taken back.Another point he told we have do randam act of Kindness by donating to starnger.For a joke told so acn you donate your house.He got wild to said if you ask any more question I will show the door.Said paid money for the course.That silent him.He is ateacher.He cant practice what he teach what kind of teaching is this.
Sudharshana Krya sounds like Viagra on breath.It rythums like sex act and sound also.Got headache after that.
Ver discriminative ways he is doing this.

MAY 31, 2010 AT 12:59 AM

Tuesday, December 8, 2009

Stupid or relaxed? Part 1

A few years into the AoL, myself a teacher then, I started noticing my mind was not as clear and sharp as it used to be. It was as if a part of my brain was dead and the rest, slowly deteriorating. I had always been a brilliant A student, with perfect memory, excellent health. I was slowly noticing I had trouble eating, swallowing food, sleeping, suffering of massive hair loss, loosing my memory, incapable of following a debate. I had lost critical thinking and the ability to discriminate or make decisions on my own without the need to ask Ravishankar first for blessings or approval. For the AoL, the intellect was my greatest enemy, thus, whatever I described as "losses" were seen as my "spiritual evolution."

The techniques were never to be questioned, of course. If anything went wrong ever, it was our fault. Our doubts were only a sign of our "low prana." He was so brilliant he even used knowledge in his favor: "there are three types of doubts: doubts in oneself, in the technique, in the master." So that, if you ever doubted any of the three, you knew you were to be blamed for being negative. Solution: do more practices, do more seva, attend more advanced courses.
Of course, I did not listen to him at that time. How could Sudarshan Kriya not be perfect? However, as my problems increased and I felt more "stupid", I was surprised to hear one of his swamis give me the same instructions: "stop doing sudarshan kriya."
In my years as a teacher, I noticed that, although every student felt more relaxed at the end of the course, not everyone felt good after a few months of practicing the techniques. Whenever we were approached with negative experiences regarding their practices, we were trained to tell them to keep on going, it was "unstressing." If anyone in the course dared challenge us about the greatness of the technique, of course, we would kindly inform them it was their low prana that was not letting them see or experience the greatness of the technique. Whenever a student had some medical evidence that showed their health deteriorated after practicing the kriya, we were taught to understand they were doing something wrong, their problem was definitely not due to the technique but to their karma, the person was not worthy of the knowledge … "next life time."
I don't doubt it has effects in the short term, but I am suspicious of its long term effects.
Today, this former A student suffers of dyslexia. I am unable to concentrate, remember anything, I turn numbers and letters around, I am unable to focus for long hours, I cannot read too much at once (as a kid I could read 7 books in a week!), I dissociate, I have sleeping disorders and other health complications.

Kriya did not relax me. It castrated me.

Today, this former A student suffers of dyslexia. I am unable to concentrate, remember anything, I turn numbers and letters around, I am unable to focus for long hours, I cannot read too much at once (as a kid I could read 7 books in a week!), I dissociate, I have sleeping disorders and other health complications.

Kriya did not relax me. It castrated me.

Posted by AoL-Free at 9:26 AM

Tuesday, December 8, 2009

Stupid or relaxed? Part 2

Struggling with my practices many years, I approached Ravishankar in different occasions about it. "Something is wrong with my sadhana, something is wrong with my mantra, there is something wrong … I don't feel good with my practices. I don't feel good afterwards. I don't feel good during the day. My head is not good. My health is not good." I don't forget his look of disbelief and surprise. He clearly did not know what to tell me. Finally, he gave me his famous, "Keep doing it. It will change. It is an astrological moment." To which I replied, "You call 5 consecutive years an astrological moment?"

For a devotee, catching the Guru in a clueless moment is perhaps one of the scariest situations ever.

A year after leaving the AoL, I stopped doing the kriya, the pranayamas, everything. It was a tough to stop it. I was used to it. I had been convinced I needed them to be successful and happy in life. To my surprise, I have not lost my radiance. In fact, people tell me I look so bright and a lot better! I was caught by surprise when someone told me one day, "Wow, you always look so happy, you are always so happy, what is your secret?" I did not know what to say! I was not doing any practice nor seva nor following a guru nor reading scriptures nor chanting mantras, and yet, people noticed my joy, my radiance, my good spirit. I used to reply to a comment like that, "Oh! I meditate!" or "Oh! You should do this wonderful course!" Suddenly, that day I realized, that joy, that light, that everything, is mine and only mine.

I am slowly recovering my ability to have critical thinking, of discriminating, of concentrating, of enjoying other things and not feel bad about it, of having interests of my own.

AoL-Free said...

Meditation, yoga and spirituality are sacred if they come from a sacred and non-fraudulent source. Playing with such techniques can cause extremely damaging effects.

FEBRUARY 14, 2010 AT 10:33 AM

Jivani said...

When I first went to AoL yoga, I found out that SK caused severe headaches for someone. But there was no alternative practice offered for this person as far as I know. I wondered about the training of the teachers. It was a warning sign. I understand it is challenging to teach people with many different health concerns but what you describe sounds more like negligence: "past life, not enough grace, etc..." is deeply misguided. It is also highly unethical in yoga teaching.

I know BKS Iyengar only teaches pranayama to students with many years of experience in yoga. I thought that was a little extreme but it is far better than this. Perhaps the reason SK is thought to be unique to AoL(though many would argue it is not unique at all) is because good teachers would never teach it.

"Meditation, yoga and spirituality are sacred if they come from a sacred and non-fraudulent source." Very well said, KLIM. Precisely the reason I will not support AoL unless they bring out into the open and correct the lies they perpetuate in the name of spirituality. I will not support an organization that has all the attributes of a mind-numbing CULT. The good never outweighs the bad in such organizations.

FEBRUARY 14, 2010 AT 1:23 PM

#7.34

Y M V Murthy said...

Good Blog. Finally someone had to bell the Cat.
My impression of SK after AOL basic course 15 years ago was exactly the same as you have mentioned. I have 35 years experience teaching and practicing yoga. When I first encountered SK I quickly sensed that it is a hotch potch technique of breathing with the primary aim of creating a marketing USP for the AOL course. A combination of rebirthing and chakra breathing all couched in some cooked up mystical origins. I never found Sudharshan Kriya practise uplifiting as compared to the pranayma which I used to practise and hence dropped it pretty soon. Later I encountered many AOL practioners who got into several physical, emotional and mental abnormalities as a result of sustained SK practice. There was no guidance or structure from AOL org for them and the only option they had to resort to was seek from the time tested traditional sources of learning and understanding pranayama. AOL does not provide such a framework. I would suggest people to look into such schools as Bihar school of Yoga where you can get so much knowledge, guidance and background on many yoga techniques. It is very important to learn these as the final aim of yoga is also Kaivalya which is being free and master of oneself. Secretive practices do not bring liberation. It will only enslave you more. I also know many AOL teachers (one who is a family member) who do not practice SK. They are into standard traditional yoga, suryanamaskara, pranayama et all. They still continue in AOL teaching this technique which they themself found harmful. They also hold positions of power in AOL org running their money making schools and so on. It is difficult to be truthful and honest if your livelihood is threatned.

#7.35

sharath said...

thanks for this blog. i did sudharshan kriya for almost one year and was continously plagued by headaches and irritable bowel syndrome. i never had this problem before. i was under the impression that i was not okay and needed more purification. i did fasts and raw food diets. all this did help but still the symptoms persisted. i got my practise and sk rhythm checked by four aol teachers including a very serious one. they all felt i am doing the practise fine. one of the teacher suggested i use the mild ayurvedic laxative Triphala. that helped a bit. i soon realized that whenever i used to skip the practise of SK i used to feel better. last year i went for a one month trek in a south indian jungle. i completely forgot the practice of sk. i was in the best of health throughout. since then i have stopped sk and i am in the best of health.
hoverver i have felt guilty of not practising. thanks to this blog i know that many other people are having problems with Sk. it is not a magic wand afterall.

FEBRUARY 18, 2010 AT 12:44 AM

#7.36

Sunshine05390156193
1 contribution

0

●○○○○

I believe the teachers need to think, what if , the students have taken it in-correctly.

Apr 2023 • Solo

My son has become very agressive. Looks like the teachings on the class, he has not intreputted in the correct way.

Written 18 April 2023

dbusundar
Thanjavur, India • 1 contribution

0

●●○○○

Problems doing aol and meditation

Jun 2012 • Solo

I practiced AOL few years ago(7 yrs), it was a vry good exp learning and practicing it for 30-40 days felt vry calm cool mind and vry relaxed all the time.my confidence level also good increased, but later on after certain period of time i felt like a different person and some time i felt lost not able to speak well to people around not able to handle even small suituations and become physically weak and some time even dont know wat to do(even will forget close relative/friends name). will not be able to prolong a conversation and reply back to the word spoken by opposite people all these problems i was facing. I slowly stopped doing yoga and started drinking heavily since i was felling a bit relaxed when doing tat.then years past slowly my mental abilities got improved not to fuller extend.Then once I started menditation by joining SM that was the moment after few days my condtion was vry worse i was not sleeping well for more than 3 week continuely and vry disturbed mind not able to wrk properly in office, even i thought of suicide few times. when i consulted a doctor he suggested to take a phychartist option and said may be a dpressive disorder.now i have consulted a phchartist and undergoing treatment for that(moderate depression,stress and anxitey).Doctor advice normal meditation and breath cleaning is sufficient for helathly living.these practices can give u a vry good result or vry rarely a bad 1 also just thought of sharing my exp'es with yoga and meditation.

Read less

Written 28 December 2012

#7.38

ananymous

August 7, 2011 at 8:46 pm

after doing part one just within 2 months i had done DSN

while doing that course Padmasadhana n kriya n all….i was started feeling like i m having some power

i think dat was just a mind game…n just love to be with me only…

n while doing yoga n kriya my movements was quite strange
\
my body parts was moving like by their own… n taking different movements which r generally dont happen in regular sadhana

i didnt understand this

i was literally started behaving like psycho…

i was thinking too much..u can say enormous thought process was going in my mind

i totally lost my mind control…

fall asick n hospitalised n diagnosed as acute psychosis…

Reply

#7.39

kartikay

September 6, 2012 at 1:51 pm

you are so true yesterday (5th september 2012) i was attending this art of living session in ambala …and fuck i wanted to kill myself

it was so irritating…

Reply

#7.40

srivitha

May 29, 2019 at 1:15 am

Hello Everyone,
Istarted SK 8 months ago, impacted negitively with SK – palputation,anxiety, fear of what is going to happen, hypervetilation.Please help me how to come out of it naturally with out medicines

Reply

#7.41

Hi!
Thanks AD for having posted this article. I was looking for answers about SK as I recently did a 3 day short course on it. The second day I had a strong fainting feeling after I completed the Kriya and had to sit up. I also felt negative and low all evening. The third day was a lil depressed. I stopped the kriya and started it after a few days. I started to feel depressed and negative all over again. I also got impatient and nasty at times. I felt like crying in the evenings. I do drink over 2 litres of water a day which they say is necessary while one practices. I am in a worse kind of state and after the kriya my hand shivers for a good 5 minutes. After reading your article I am glad am not the only one. Was a big mistake to have done the Art of Living course. It didnt work for me.

God Bless you

Newbie

teteawit@yahoo.com

#7.42

r/Ex_ArtOfLiving • 1 mo. ago
Dizzy-Boysenberry-29

Rant - This group is relieving & unsettling at the same time

I was a part of AOL for over a decade - started at the age of 18 in the year 2009. Technically the first decade of my adult years I gave to this org. Today I am left with regrets and a deep feeling of betrayal.

First, the research around SKY socialised in this group has been an eye opener. Each practice especially the early years intensified my depression, anxiety and pure insanity. Every time I would share my trauma with a teacher or "senior teacher", their response was that this is my past life trauma coming out. I should continue and do more advance courses to ease out. How dumb and blind sided was I to follow those advices? I feel betrayed and my faith let down.

Second, during my college years my AOL Yes!+ "Mentor" (wish I could drop names!) would purely gaslight me into working for AOL and the guru over studying or pursuing my career or simply chilling with my non AOL college friends. And how dumb was I to follow him? Where is he now in my life? Nowhere. I take full accountability for draining out my time and energy in my younger years. I didn't know better. But these SO called mentors and teachers who misguide younger folks like me are the worst people. I feel betrayed. Betrayed.

I am just glad that along the way, at some point I had the wisdom to see through all the BS. And take control of my life. I still have a more years to compensate for the time drained.

Rela17 • 1mo ago • Edited 8d ago

I resonate with the points raised by Dizzy-Boysenberry-29 and found Dr. Philip Brown's research on Sudarshan Kriya's contraindications especially relevant. My own experience with anxiety and PTSD overlapped with what others like Parth Choksi have described.

During a period of complicated grief, I practiced Long Kriya and initially felt uplifted—but a few days later, I had a severe panic attack. I was diagnosed with PTSD, and while homeopathy and Short Kriya helped intermittently, symptoms like anxiety and headaches persisted. An Advanced Course darshan with Sri Sri led to a suggestion to focus on meditation. But later, even guided meditations began triggering derealization, and a doctor advised stopping them temporarily. Yoga Nidra and body scans helped restore some stability.

Despite these challenges, I tried returning to Kriya. A follow-up Long Kriya again triggered anxiety and another panic attack, this time without an obvious trigger. This pattern—panic attacks 3–4 days after Long Kriya—while not doing Short Sudarshan Kriya in those 3-4 days— repeated. My doctor pointed to possible biochemical shifts, especially under stress, dehydration, or disrupted sleep. The doctor also told if you abruptly stop taking some drugs that give you a high, or increase dopamine and serotonin, it can also cause panic attacks. Interestingly the research on Sudarshan Kriya does cite how Sudarshan Kriya greatly increases the dopamine and serotonin snd other such feel good neurotransmitters. I wonder if this could have been an explanation. But I can only keep wondering.

Reading Dr. Brown's findings that fast breathing can trigger panic in vulnerable individuals validated my experience. He recommends gradual reintroduction, starting only with Ujjayi. This made me realize how important it is to tailor these practices.

But it left me wondering—why didn't I hear any of this from Art of Living? There was no screening or caution about anxiety or PTSD. Across six teachers, I got inconsistent guidance: avoid Bhastrika, do it gently, or proceed as usual. Only a couple acknowledged the need for modification.

This inconsistency raised concerns about training, awareness of research, and whether safety protocols exist. If even basic contraindications aren't communicated, how can vulnerable participants be protected?

Though I still feel a sense of peace in Sri Sri's presence, I struggle with some of his shifting public statements and the silence around issues like this. It's hard to reconcile the image of an all-knowing Guru with my unanswered experiences. And yet, I find it hard to detach—his presence still draws me in, even as I question and seek independence.

Rela17 • 21d ago

Your words really resonated with me—I'm sorry you went through this, but it's comforting to know we're not alone.

I completely agree: if multiple people were advised to stop or modify Kriya, that should've been communicated clearly. The lack of deeper information around how Sudarshan Kriya actually works has left many confused. Most explanations just repeat the same ideas about rhythms in nature, without offering real insight like what's available in detailed Kriya Yoga teachings elsewhere.

If you're open to it, sharing more about your experience could really help others feel seen and supported. Honest stories matter now more than ever.

1 Reply Award Share ...

MaleficentTrouble884 • 20d ago

I have a similar story.

2 Reply Award Share ...

PLC-Pro • 1mo ago

Can you please share what was actually happening to you when you mention that you were having trauma? The practices are not straining to the body in particular. I wonder what can cause such an unsettling experience for someone.

1 Reply Award Share ...

Dizzy-Boysenberry-29 OP • 1mo ago

Have you heard people having experiences after their first long Sudarshan kriya? Similar, but more frequent. More imp, a drained state after the practice.

1 Reply Award Share ...

#7.45

r/Ex_ArtOfLiving • 5 mo. ago
OofWhyAmIOnReddit

Alternative ways to learn SKY breath?

I'm also convinced that AoL is pretty cult-like in many ways. I think as far as cults go, it's fairly innocuous. It's not NXIVM or something, but still, I don't want to go and have a spiritual experience doing Kriya yoga and then devote 10 years of my life to recruiting other people, or being brainwashed. I know I'm susceptible to such things, so I'm cautious.

I signed up for the intro course but had a huge anxiety reaction right as we were about to do the SKY practice and had to leave. I think this is partly because I felt too much energy in my system and I didn't want to overwhelm it by bringing in more, and I also felt like if I stayed for the meditation then I'd really kind of have an obligation to the other people in the course / to honor the organization and the practice in a way I didn't want to commit to.

However, I'd love to learn the technique as it seems useful. From what I understand, after doing the 3 pranayama practices and some Om chanting, you do a SoHam meditation, usually led by Sri Sri Ravi Shankar. I'd rather just find a recording of this or something similar elsewhere, and practice on my own, without the baggage from AoL.

For what it's worth, I thought the teacher for the intro course was very genuine, and I really felt for her and for how much AoL had helped her through a difficult period of my life. But it also seemed a lot like the Hindu equivalent of someone who'd found Jesus during a difficult period and now really wanted everyone to join their megachurch and get involved. Not for me.

Thanks!

Former practitioner PERMALINK

May 28, 2012 2:52 pm

"To whom it may concern" and others in search of other opinions. The unfortunate case of the woman is not uncommon. It is a lot more common than what you can imagine, except teachers and RS have arrogantly ignored them, blamed someone else (even the victim) for the tragic episodes post course, and hid under the rugs. I witnessed several of these cases. The one for which I feel the most is someone who ended up in a pyschiquiatric hospital for almost half a year. She is now to be medicated for life. She used to be a very good dentist. Today, she cannot treat anyone, nor do anything else. When the teacher was confronted, he turned his head elsewhere and blamed the local teacher who had organized the course. And then, blamed it on the victim's bad karma." And imagine if it was not with AoL under the Guru's Grace! It would have been worse!" He never showed concerned for the person, or needs to be more careful in future instances. When confronted the Guru, he denied any such possibility and then, said, "Nothing you could do if someone had bad karma." In one of the courses, the teacher asked what was everyone's fear. To the one who confessed was scared of darkness and be trapped in a small room, he had his group drag him, and dump him in a small closet, while cheering everyone outside to yell, "coward!" and stuff of the sort, while the person yelled from inside. You question if teachers are qualified to teach SK? Well, we should be questioning a lot more than that. Are teachers qualified to play people pyschologically, with psychological problems, thinking they know it all? RS and company look down on the word "psychology". They know very little about it. What they are doing is very dangerous. And again, in the course registration, one agrees to release AoL of any responsibility. One should start by questioning why is AoL so interested in freeing themselves from responsibility from the beginning?

LauraBrown765 • 1y ago

Hi, thank you for sharing your experience. People that have suffered really need to talk about it more. If anyone asks me, I couldn't emphasise more to STAY AWAY from the Art of Living and every other "spiritual, wellbeing" organisation.

I was "groomed" into AOL UK at the age of 17 and stayed within the organisation for 6 years. I was a very vulnerable teenager, suffering from grief, depression, anxiety, body pain and suicidal ideation. I ended up becoming a teacher for the organisation because I was honestly so brainwashed into believing that we were doing humanitarian work that was changing lives.

I found that SKY Breathing was "a high" for me, almost like injecting a drug. It would feel like an uncontrollable high that made me very hyper with manic thoughts. At the same time it does have its benefits for me - it lowers my anxiety, boosts my energy, improves my sleep and my body pain. However, it never "cured my depression" or suicidal tendencies like AOL teachers claim it will. In fact, AOL teachers delayed my recovery with mental health, because they wouldn't allow me to take anti-depressants. I did stop practicing SKY for 14 months after leaving AOL but have recently returned to it for the benefits. But there are many breathing techniques out there such as the Wim Hof Method, which are completely free and can have the same results.

Due to my high vulnerability and willingness to be open, it meant that a lot of people pressured, manipulated and exploited me for the benefit of the organisation and to recruit more youth. They wanted to make me the poster child for more and more young people to join. They target schools, colleges and universities by using their young volunteers/teachers to give free intro talks or free meditation sessions. These are all recruitment and marketing techniques so that the organisation can make more money. They know that young people are the most enthusiastic, energetic and dynamic people that can get their work done. At the same time, young people are very easily controlled, influenced, and preyed upon.

I completely lost myself, my identity, my decision-making abilities, my mental health and my physical health. My suicidal ideation was at its peak after I became a teacher in 2021. And when I wasn't getting any healthier or better, they blamed it all on me and my weaknesses. So I always blamed myself and not the toxic environment within AOL.

Truth is, I was totally abused - emotionally, financially, mentally, physically and psychologically. It's insane how a wellbeing organisation can drain someone so much of their time, energy and money. I was spending every single living breathing minute on volunteering for them.

After I left AOL, I've spent a lot of time in therapy, studying cults and researching abuse. It's been 2 years, but I still have triggers and I'm still navigating chronic pain and ill health because of the damage it's had on me - on top of my existing trauma before AOL. I'm now so passionate about speaking my truth and preventing anyone from joining a cult or controlling, abusive relationships.

12 Reply Award Share ...

#7.48

AOLTOK Whistleblower • 3mo ago • Edited 3mo ago

Chetana Ramachandran, a new mother from Chandigarh, was found dead under mysterious circumstances at Sobha Iris apartment in Bangalore. She was reportedly separated from her husband and was following The Art of Living Temple of Knowledge in Bellandur. Her maid's name is Usha who has mentioned that she was suffering from depression and regularly attended meditation sessions (follow ups).

In the UK, it's advised that new mothers avoid learning or practicing Sudarshan Kriya (SKY) due to risks associated with postpartum depression. Given past cases of suicides among SKY practitioners and teachers, I'm therefore sharing this story—at the request of a friend from this subreddit—to raise concerns about the potential mental health risks, especially for new mothers and the practice of Sudarshan Kriya.

This case was covered by both the *Bangalore Mirror and Times of India*, the news also mentions her husband, Vivek Ramachandran, in the comments section, who happens to be a well-known software hacker who works with Microsoft.

https://bangaloremirror.indiatimes.com/bangalore/crime/sobha-iris-apartment-chetna-ramchandran/articleshowprint/48793973.cms?prtpage=1

https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/bengaluru/private-company-employee-found-dead-under-mysterious-circumstances-in-bengaluru/articleshow/48790338.cms?messageid=2684370953&intenttarget=no&r=1494219314303

#7.49

artofliving.org/eu-en/wisdom/facing-criticism

Gurudev, what to do with people who do their kriya and meditation daily but still have suicidal tendencies?

Sri Sri Ravi Shankar:

They should do more courses and spend more times in satsang. They should keep themselves busy and engage in some seva activity.

Wednesday, December 16, 2009

Psychotherapist leaves a comment

The blog received the following note in Spanish from an anonymous that did not detail where he/she is from. After asking someone to translate it, I thought it'd be interesting to share it (original note followed by translation).

"He leido el blog, me impactó dad la importancia de empezar a darse cuenta de lo riesgoso del Arte de Vivir para la Salud Mental de muchas personas que lo frecuentan. En mi rol de psicoterapeuta he asistido varias personas que han resultado dañadas psiquicamente por lo que podria decirse "un lavado de cerebro" encubierto con una busqueda espiritual. No discuto los aspectos vinculados a la respiracion que adecuadamente ejercitados pueden ser positivos, me refiero a lo que en general sigue despues con respecto a cierta adoración de un "guru", que se cree una especie de encarnación de dios sobre la tierra, y que el se lo crea sería su problema, el tema que personas que he asistido han sido "programadas" para seguirlo y pierden su propia identidad en una masificación conductual que no puede ser cuestionada, algo asi como que él posee una Verdad y que impide la propia pregunta acerca de ella."

I read the blog. I am happy with the impact it is making. It is important people start to realize how risky AoL is for the mental health of the many people who attend it. In my capacity as a psychotherapist, I have treated several members who have suffered psychological damages. One can say there is "brain-washing" disguised as search for spirituality. I don't question the benefits of the breathing exercises, which, correctly practiced can be positive. I am referring to what follows, the adoration of a "guru", someone who believes himself as the embodiment of God on earth. It is his problem if he believes this. But I have noticed in the members I have treated that they were somewhat "programmed" to follow him and loose their own identity to a cultural massification that cannot be questioned. Somehow the idea is he has the Truth and noone is allowed to question it.

Posted by AoL-Free at 3:41 PM

"The mind is where breath first becomes emotion.
The experiences speak of anxiety, depersonalization, or depressive states. These stories when approached with empathy; they mirror the tender intersection of psyche and spirit. Mental unrest following deep breathing is not weakness - it is physiology meeting psychology.
May such testimonies lead to better teacher training and mental-health referrals where needed"

Reported Adverse Effect Domain 8– Cognitive Health

SUMMARY OF ADVERSE REACTIONS AND SIDE EFFECTS

ACTUAL LIST OF ADVERSE SYMPTOMS REPORTED IN ONLINE REVIEWS AND COMMENTS:

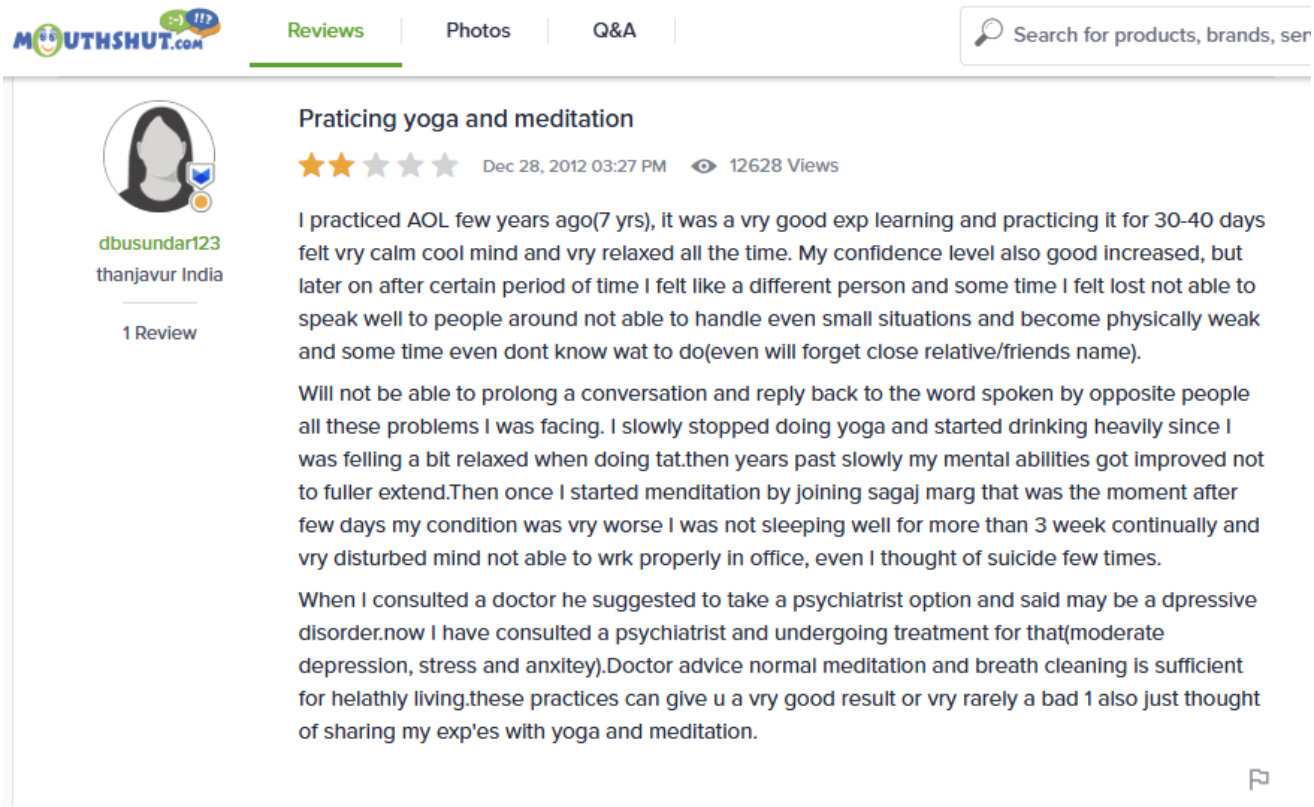
MEMORY PROBLEMS, THINKING, ATTENTION AND FOCUS PROBLEMS

NUMBER OF CASES REPORTED:

AT LEAST 58 FOUND ON INTERNET. THERE ARE MORE SUSPECTED TO BE OFFLINE OR UNREPORTED ON INTERNET

INSTANCES OF ADVERSE REACTIONS AND SIDE EFFECTS REPORTED ONLINE

#8.1


MOUTHSHUT.COM
Reviews
Photos
Q&A
Search for products, brands, ser
Praticing yoga and meditation
Dec 28, 2012 03:27 PM
12628 Views
dbusundar123
thanjavur India
1 Review
I practiced AOL few years ago(7 yrs), it was a vry good exp learning and practicing it for 30-40 days felt vry calm cool mind and vry relaxed all the time. My confidence level also good increased, but later on after certain period of time I felt like a different person and some time I felt lost not able to speak well to people around not able to handle even small situations and become physically weak and some time even dont know wat to do(even will forget close relative/friends name).
Will not be able to prolong a conversation and reply back to the word spoken by opposite people all these problems I was facing. I slowly stopped doing yoga and started drinking heavily since I was felling a bit relaxed when doing tat.then years past slowly my mental abilities got improved not to fuller extend.Then once I started menditation by joining sagaj marg that was the moment after few days my condition was vry worse I was not sleeping well for more than 3 week continually and vry disturbed mind not able to wrk properly in office, even I thought of suicide few times.
When I consulted a doctor he suggested to take a psychiatrist option and said may be a dpressive disorder.now I have consulted a psychiatrist and undergoing treatment for that(moderate depression, stress and anxitey).Doctor advice normal meditation and breath cleaning is sufficient for helathly living.these practices can give u a vry good result or vry rarely a bad 1 also just thought of sharing my exp'es with yoga and meditation.

#8.2

Swimming-Electron • 10mo ago
Me, i get dissociated from doing meditation. Ever since doing the advanced course i also feel very lethargic and my mind blanks out something that used to happen when i was doing the SKY regularly in childhood which only stopped years later. But i acted like an idiot and ended up taking up the advanced course and this is happening again. The unable to respond quickly has become my personality since i was doing the BWS since the age of 7 and SKY since 11.
4
Reply
Award
Share

#8.3

Anonymous PERMALINK

March 28, 2011 1:19 pm

Contrary to AOL claims, in my experience the practices had an adverse effect on short term memory, the ability to focus, and the ability to sleep.

#8.4

Shefali Saini · 6y

I also experience such things when i do the kriya....yes relaxation is there but i think its too relaxing and I become less rational and my memory retention capacity reduces...i should probably stop doing it... thanku for sharing your experience.!

#8.5

Hi you are absolutely right I do Sudarshan kriya only 1 time but after that I feel dull mind no thought come in my mind And I lost my inner emotion and what can I do please suggest me

2 Reply

#8.6

I clearly felt that when I arrested breath my brain mi nd went duller. Before I was feeling more relaxed. Infact I doubt if it is relaxation or dullness !

#8.7

Deep Rasania · Follow

2y

It is harmful because it promotes shallow breathing. After doing it you will feel good, but this feeling only last for few minutes. Then you will feel mental fog throughout the day. You get disturbed in small things.

I felt this when one day I switched my pranayam practice with this kriya. I felt that it promotes fast breath. Which is cause of anger, distress.

It is better to do pranayam than doing this. Deep breathing is key to health and happiness.

You upvoted this

#8.8

Anonymous PERMALINK

May 26, 2012 11:51 am

I practiced SK for over a decade and now my memory is so bad that I cant recollect or even comprehend what I have read or heard. AOL friends told me, “Its because you have grown old. Think about it. You are no longer in your early 20’s” (yeah, i was almost 30 when I started to experience memory loss).

My life is miserable now as I am not able to understand things. I cant recollect things, even simple words to hold a conversation. What I speak sounds too incoherent or at least I think so as I need to search my brain for the info.

I have also lost the clarity of speech that I once had and also received numerous compliments for.

After I stopped SK, there was an improvement in my memory but definitely not enough to live a normal life. Impaired memory and thereby impaired intellect has made it impossible for me to live an independent life.

If anyone here knows a way to help me improve my memory, please share the info.

#8.9

Nagesh PERMALINK

July 22, 2011 10:57 am

In a way harshal is right about the physiological and pathological. There is a symptom and a continued evidence of this leads to pathology. You can really see the pathological effects of Sudarshan Kriya in the long term practitioners. it has been my personal experience that long term practice of sudarshan kriya causes pathological symptoms – loss of memory, fidgeting, nervous disorders and many others. As an ex-teacher, I have observed this in several people well known to me. I have also seen that lot of these long time AOLers do not practice SK. Even the first family members Ravishankar, Bhanu Didi and the late Pitaji Ratnam never regularly practiced kriya.

#8.10

Unberable PERMALINK

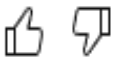
May 28, 2012 6:17 pm

I completely agree , with many medical symptoms stated above. I also suffered from memory loss , but fortunately have stopped doing the SK and feeling ,normal and happy now.
But i see that many senior teachers are always , depressed, sick and bored and eternally unhappy with RS as they don't get quality time with him, or find that he is more partial to some famous and money making teachers than them.

Many of them i know are flat broke and depressed ,but flash a bright smile and provide ample amount of false knowledge to devotees and then curse fellow teaches in private. With such a stressful life, i completely understand why they are unable to follow the knowledge.
If this is spirituality , then i am surely not interested.

#8.11

Perfectly said sir, from the past 35 years I have been associated with some of these people and came to know, people cannot do this kriya daily and if someone is pressuring himself and doing, we can see some mental health/ physical health problems in him.. all of his courses are some thatikut parvadi to make money.. 😁😁 ...



Reply

#8.12

"The Revolver" Anonymous PERMALINK

May 29, 2012 8:06 am

memory loss: From 2008 to 2011 I did SK everyday with long SK every sunday. Along with getting refreshed on that day, brainwashed to spend more money on charities etc., I developed strange memory loss. I had a severe short term memory loss (not able to remember the points I thought of a couple of minutes before, so I saw myself using post it notes more often, quite embarrassingly sometimes).

After I took the bold decision of leaving the SK crutch, I am much better off at work and in personal life too. Infact I thank SK for letting me know what freedom is. Now I laugh when someone says, you have "low prana", "more rajas because I ate onion??", more tamas because I took a aubergine dish?...I proved them wrong by having a load of aubergines before my interview and guess what, tamas made sure that I succeeded in the interview 😊 :), I don't blame the teacher who said this, because I know the teacher needs help too...just believe in yourself, and don't give your remote control to some teacher...oh as one of the knowledge points of basic course says, "Don't become football of others' (teachers') opinion".

#8.13

Yuvraj Krishnan · 3y

Your perspective perfectly resonates with mine. My parents are both teachers and Blind devotees of Sri Sri the man more than his teachings. I haven't seen my parents apply his teachings in their own lives practically. Also, they can't make a single decision however big or small by themselves and instead use Yes or No chits in front of Sri Sri's photo. More than anything, whenever I attempt to question the logic in their blind beliefs, I'm being smirked at ironically. Brain washing level 100. Thank you for your A to A. I'm glad to know I'm not the only only one that thinks a lot of this to be absurd.

#8.14

Anonymous PERMALINK

May 29, 2012 1:12 pm

Your memory will come back when you have left the environment of Art of Living, the Satsangs, Ravi Shankar, and avoided that company. It takes some time, but you'll be fine. I had the same experience. I couldn't think properly. I know people who told me that even their handwriting became illegible. Their hands began to tremble all the time, etc. And, like you, none were 'old'. Most of the people around Ravi Shankar cannot think properly, in my opinion, and experience. Pray for the true Grace of God, and you will be alright. I gave up on Ravi Shankar and Art of Living, but not on Grace of God. All 'masters' or 'saints' are not fake, also, but you must learn to discriminate between them.

#8.15

Jr. PERMALINK

May 26, 2012 6:20 pm

I'm really sorry to hear this Anonymous. I didn't have this same experience with memory, but I could definitely feel my critical thinking was becoming more dull with the practice of SK. Since I've stopped, I feel I've normalized, although it did take some months. My problems as I've stated were more fatigue and allergy issues.

I am NO expert on this subject, but my suggestion would be to start some light exercise like jogging two miles or some other sort of cardio exercise like swimming. Some people claim this is good for the brain. Eating healthy is also always beneficial to the body and brain, if you're not already doing that. I really do believe our bodies and brains are capable of amazing recovery, but it takes time. Most importantly, don't lose hope. It makes me really upset to read stories like yours. I wish you the best on your recovery.

#8.16

Observer Jr. PERMALINK

March 29, 2011 1:08 pm

Welcome.

You'll find more than just a few people here have had major problems with kriya, myself included. I practiced it fairly regularly for 8 years. I was in great health, but I began seeing problems after 4 years, and grew worse after that. All my issues healed after a few months of stopping kriya. It was proof to me that the practice was dangerous.

Is it dangerous for all? Probably not. Some appear to have good experiences, including yourself. Not everyone can follow the same diet, and not everyone can do the same practices.

If you continue to practice, just monitor your health very carefully. Watch for signs like eyes getting dark circles. allergy issues may come from nowhere, blood pressure or pulse problems are possible, energy level may reduce significantly, critical thinking or desire for life may disappear... these are all very possible when practicing kriya for the long term.

#8.17

Saurabh *says:*

December 6, 2011 at 2:59 pm

Hello .. I think Nadi Shodhana was part of the DSN program of the Art of Living since 1996, it was taught along with a practice of a set of asanas, and the whole sequence is called the Padma Sadhana. Also before beginning the poojas SSRS and the people always do Nadi Shodhana pranayaams. Even in the basic course some teachers teach the technique, since quite some time back. I am not an art of living supporter but any way I would not like to discredit them for something for which they are not at fault. They might be at fault for not teaching the nadi shodhana from the very start but they are not at all guilty for not teaching the nadi shodhana at all. As per my information Nadi shodhana had always been taught at follow ups, satsangs etc after the basic course right from the very beginning of aol.

I am not a supporter of AoL as I myself have suffered a lot of negative affects from Sudarshan Kriya(9 years almost regular practice), such as loss of calculating power, high blood pressure, loss of hair etc. I have benefited after leaving the practice and focusing on only doing Asanas, and avoiding any sort of heavy breathing at all.

Reply

Sandeep PERMALINK

May 29, 2012 6:33 am

I would like to say about my own experience with SK.I did it after my 12 std exams.After the course I was very much attached to the kriya and SSR.But after some months I experienced some problems including dull feeling,lack of interest in anything,heaviness in the eyes.But still continued because when i asked aol they said it was detoxification.I believed that.after 8-9 months i had palpitations.but still continued.then a time came when i suddenly got angry and had lot of problems like chest pains.I had dumb feeling also.not interested in anything.

Then I went to a kalari master(Kalaripayattu) and learned kalari.With those I overcame these things.I regret doing SK and wasting a part of my life.This is nothing but fooling people.

#8.19

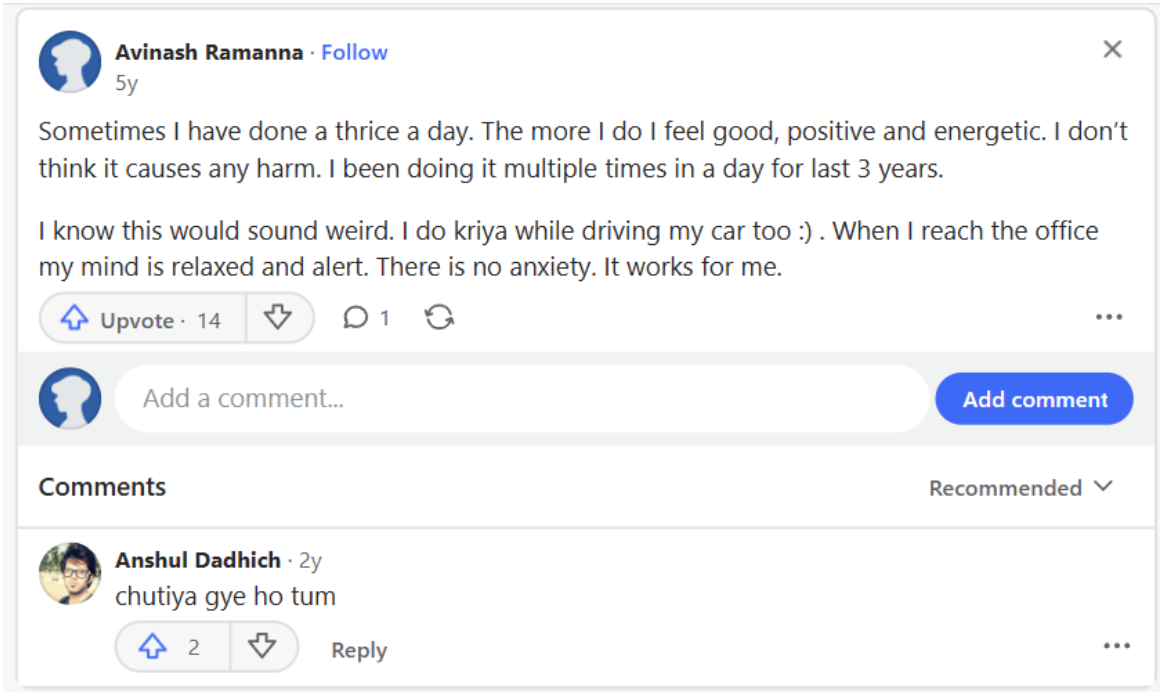
kk PERMALINK

May 18, 2012 12:23 pm

Hi All, I did Sudarshan kriya, some times and decided to stop as I found the technique is not natural(breathing fast and slow) and harmful to my body. I suffered from head aches, sleeplessness, confusion and irritation. I have been practising martial arts for 2.5 years and I never had such bad experiences. I would say, take care when you interefering with your breath and don't simply listen to AOL teachers. Use your brain! This is a big business now-a-days. Supporting factor: almost 85% people who attended the classess complained about various body related problems and these issues were ignored as 'body is getting rid of toxin'

Kk

#8.20


Avinash Ramanna · Follow
5y
Sometimes I have done a thrice a day. The more I do I feel good, positive and energetic. I don't think it causes any harm. I been doing it multiple times in a day for last 3 years.
I know this would sound weird. I do kriya while driving my car too :) . When I reach the office my mind is relaxed and alert. There is no anxiety. It works for me.
Upvote · 14
1
Add a comment...
Add comment
Comments
Recommended
Anshul Dadhich · 2y
chutiya gye ho tum
2
Reply

#8.21

Rajiv Tanwar · Follow
Works at Tanwar Hospital · 9y

Related **I did my Art of Living course about a year ago. I used to feel strong vibrations just after Sudarshan Kriya. But now I don't feel those kind of vibrations anymore. Does that mean I am not doing it properly?**

Since I have done all their courses and practised Sudarshan Kriya for long I will tell you what it is all about.
The so called Sudarshan Kriya is nothing but forced hyperventilation, which washes out all the carbon-dioxide from your lungs and causes Hypocapnia. This gives you a light headed feeling and causes vasodilatation. Regular practise makes you used to those changes and you fail to feel the same so called vibrations which you felt initially. There fore to give you a periodic extra dose the Art of Living group organises group long Kriya to keep the flock together and prevent their disconnect.
Most aerobic exercises also lead to increased breathing but that is not forced hyperventilation. Body needs more Oxygen and needs to wash out more Carbon -Dioxide it has produced during the exercise.

12.6K views · View 23 upvotes 1 of 6 answers

#8.22

Genuine Seeker PERMALINK
September 3, 2010 12:26 pm

Hi Doctor,

Well said. I too have passed through similar emotions and feelings. Infact I could see my words through your writing. I was very confused during the Advanced / DSN courses. I was told by my DSN teacher these are mind pop ups, and ignore them. This conflict has bothered me a lot. I tried finding answers for the questions raised by you , no proper answer from anyone.(In fact people look at you as if I am arrogant and odd man out).

So much of pressure on us to enrol new members for basic course as part of DSN program. Not only they want confirmation of members for new basic course (in less than 2 hr time) but also they want the FEE to be paid by them in advance (I consider it as fee not Donation) .Of course this was part of the exercise .. Breaking your barriers.. (No doubt this has helped me personally and many others but i felt the main motive is not helping the DSN participants to shred their barriers but to enrol new members in disguise. You could see it easily. Better not to say more on how they have motivated (Brainwash / hypnotise... please let me know if any other synonyms I could use..) participants for donations... DSN is nothing but Donations and publicity course. Off course one would get to know the MIRACLES OF GURUJI... (If Guruji has done so many miracles atleast for couple of questions related to shooting episode and recent interview in Malaysia the answer was " I don't know" How come Guruji doesn't know anything !!!!!!!

#8.23

Wednesday, December 23, 2009

Sudarshan Kriya: FREEING or FRYING the mind?

BY HUMBLE WITNESS

Blank. That is how I remember feeling after my first kriya--blank, unable to think, lightheaded, and numb/tingly all over. I admit, it was mildly pleasant. At that time, it did occur to me that breathing faster and deeper than my body required for an extended period of time might actually be harmful. But because of the teacher's reassurance that these effects are normal, combined with the fact that others in the class shared the same experiences, I ignored my intuition and neglected to research the physiological effects of over-breathing. And coming from a scientific background, I am still miffed at myself for not having researched it back then, but according to the old adage, "its better late than never"...

After devoting years of my life to AoL, serving as a volunteer and teacher, and blindly propagating the myth that the kriya is beneficial and should be practiced daily, I now realize that I have made a tremendous error in judgment, and that sudarshan kriya (aka hyperventilation) is harmful. This is just one of the reasons why I chose to leave AoL and cease promoting its practices.

BY HUMBLE WITNESS

I also have my own experience to back up my conclusion that sk is downright harmful. During my involvement with the organization, I have witnessed many suffer from mental imbalance and detrimental effects after practicing kriya. I have known two people who had to stop doing kriya because it induced panic attacks in them. I have witnessed one pour soul lose mental stability and have to be committed due to manic episodes and delusions of grandeur. And I have seen three well-adjusted, well-educated individuals with a promising future and a passion for their career only to abruptly decide to throw away their education to do full-time "seva" for AoL. As for me, I can remember how I used to be before ever practicing kriya—much more sharp, and quick to respond and recall words and names. I feel my intellect has dulled since then. And after reading Klim's posts, I realize I am not alone.

I can't claim to know what is good for everyone else, but I can draw from my own faculties and experiences to decide what is right for me. I whole-heartedly encourage everyone else to do the same.

Posted by AoL-Free at 3:59 PM

Tuesday, December 8, 2009

Stupid or relaxed? Part 2

Struggling with my practices many years, I approached Ravishankar in different occasions about it. "Something is wrong with my sadhana, something is wrong with my mantra, there is something wrong … I don't feel good with my practices. I don't feel good afterwards. I don't feel good during the day. My head is not good. My health is not good." I don't forget his look of disbelief and surprise. He clearly did not know what to tell me. Finally, he gave me his famous, "Keep doing it. It will change. It is an astrological moment." To which I replied, "You call 5 consecutive years an astrological moment?"

For a devotee, catching the Guru in a clueless moment is perhaps one of the scariest situations ever.

A year after leaving the AoL, I stopped doing the kriya, the pranayamas, everything. It was a tough to stop it. I was used to it. I had been convinced I needed them to be successful and happy in life. To my surprise, I have not lost my radiance. In fact, people tell me I look so bright and a lot better! I was caught by surprise when someone told me one day, "Wow, you always look so happy, you are always so happy, what is your secret?" I did not know what to say! I was not doing any practice nor seva nor following a guru nor reading scriptures nor chanting mantras, and yet, people noticed my joy, my radiance, my good spirit. I used to reply to a comment like that, "Oh! I meditate!" or "Oh! You should do this wonderful course!" Suddenly, that day I realized, that joy, that light, that everything, is mine and only mine.

I am slowly recovering my ability to have critical thinking, of discriminating, of concentrating, of enjoying other things and not feel bad about it, of having interests of my own.

I met Sri Sri Ravishankar in the early 90s. I did not think much about him then. He seemed an ordinary small size Indian man dressed in white, with simple answers which often mocked the questions made by the public, giggled more than lectured - nothing really outstanding. I remember being more captivated by the eccentricity of his followers. Some seemed to float around, as if they were high on some peace and love pill, throwing flowers in the corridors, singing, dancing as they greeted us, brain dead, brainless, handing brochures, speaking to us about the wonders of this man they were following since God knows how long. The whole event was lame, small, uneventful, boring. I left suspicious, dull, cheated. How did I, a year later, got sucked into the organization, I still wonder. I had received very high education, considered myself intelligent and skeptical. But I do know that when he, Ravishankar, wants to lure a newcomer with potential (either because of the capacities the person presents or his/her contacts or he/she has money), he is the perfection of Don Casanova.

I went from disliking everything about him to being passionately in love with him. I found every stupid word he uttered, wise, deep, even funny. To my surprise, I can watch the very same talks today and find them shallow and repetitive. Actually, he never says anything new nor mind-blowing. I'd name it, "Variations on a Theme of Ravishankar" (without any doubt Rachmaninoff had a lot more creativity, depth, genius, confirmed by his numerous master pieces).

#8.24

Soundar says

I practiced AOL few years ago(7 yrs), it was a vry good exp learning and practicing it for 30-40 days felt vry calm cool mind and vry relaxed all the time.my confidence level also good increased, but later on after certain period of time i felt like a different person and some time i felt lost not able to speak well to people around not able to handle even small suituations and become physically weak and some time even dont know wat to do(even will forget close relative friends name). will not be able to prolong a conversation and reply back to the word spoken by opposite people all these problems i was facing. I slowly stopped doing yoga and started drinking heavily since i was felling a bit relaxed when doing tat.then years past slowly my mental abilities got improved not to fuller extend.Then once I started menditation by joining sagaj marg that was the moment after few days my condtion was vry worse i was not sleeping well for more than 3 week continuely and vry disturbed mind not able to wrk properly in office, even i thought of suicide few times. when i consulted a doctor he suggested to take a phychartist option and said may be a dpressive disorder.now i have consulted a phchartist and undergoing treatment for that(moderate depression,stress and anxitey).Doctor advice normal meditation and breath cleaning is sufficient for helathly living.these practices can give u a vry good result or vry rarely a bad 1 also just thought of sharing my exp'es with yoga and meditation.

Reply

Daisy
Used to follow Sri Sri Ravi Shankar for almost 20 years. · Author has **251** answers and **211.5K** answer views · Feb 10

In my opinion, no.

There was news about a suicide of a long-time sevak in the Bangalore ashram,

30-yr-old housekeeper of Art of Living Ashram hangs self in Bengaluru
BENGALURU: A 30-year-old man from Haryana, who was working as a housekeeper, i...
https://www.newindianexpress.com/cities/bengaluru/2022/Dec/12/30-yr-old-hous...

But we did not see Sri Sri Ravi Shankar acknowledging what has happened or stop claiming that Sudarshan Kriya and AOL techniques are unconditionally good for everyone. He still recommends 'pushing people who are depressed into kriya.'

Log into Facebook
Notice You must log in to continue.
https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=1047684583391856&id=100044509716309&set=a.780...

Personally, I have seen an AOL teacher talk about the suicide of one of her students right after they did the Art of Living program to a senior AOL teacher. The senior AOL teacher's advice was to just keep on focussing on the Guru and not get distracted. There seems to be zero objectivity about the possible negative effects of the Sudarshan Kriya/ Sky meditation in senior AOL teacher's minds.

#8.26

By Parth Choksi in experience, realizations

October 31, 2010 178 Comments

I had done sudarshan kriya many times and i had experienced the harmful effects of it since last 4 years. I have been doing it since last 4 years in gaps as after experiencing its harmful effect, leaving it and somehow again after some time doing it either by getting attracted to improve health from it or getting influenced by art of living people constantly influencing you, and again and again i have been experiencing the same dull effects, but not anymore. I have decided to fully dissociate myself from art of living. I think my experience needs to be shared with people to find some out there who is experiencing the same. I would list some of the effects that i have felt after some of the Sudarshan Kriya.

1. don't feel like doing anything, dont want to work, earn, talk etc

2. unable to think, take decision, unable to concentrate, inattentiveness. cant put your mind on work. unable to focus and be determined. (i was so focused on working on my website, but after doing long kriya i just don't feel and care less about it or infact i care less about anything. I can feel the damage in the brain. i dont feel the awareness to feel, focus and do it; something in mind that makes us want to do things is just not felt and i know because it was there before and how because of it i was able to work on a stretch and be motivated to work)

3. don't feel to respond to others, being unresponsive. feeling dejected; dont care about the things happening around, make you emotionless.

4. dont feel good in mind. Feels like something is missing in the brain.

5. dont feel aware, Lack of awareness to feel and act. Due to lack of awareness, sometimes negative thoughts come.

6. irritation, restlessness, negative ego feelings of possessiveness, jealousy, shyness, narrow mindedness, selfish, unhappiness, pleasure attachments and negative thoughts arise be due to lack of energy and awareness which puts in bad mood.

7. a very dull feeling, makes the mind dull.

8. earlier i had felt heaviness in the eyes and in between the eyes.

9. physical symptoms include tingling in the feet and weakness(lack of energy), lethargy in

ParthChoksi

February 23, 2011 at 5:08 pm

I have no medical condition and i have seen many people having the symptoms like headache, tingling at the extremities, light headedness, muscle twitches, dizziness, and the art of living teachers misguide them saying it is release of negative toxins or energy flow while they are the clear symptoms of hyperventilations. it is the fact that the deep and fast volunteer breathing leads to release of carbon dioxide at the rate larger than it is produced in the body which leads to the condition of alkalosis leading to vasoconstriction and the symptoms.

Reply

Sanjay

September 4, 2011 at 8:27 pm

As per your analysis, all athletes in the world should suffer from hyperventilation, respiratory alkalosis and hypocapnia as fast breathing is part of their life.
And btw i am not a marketing agent, just another software engineer in Bangalore who has a very stressful job and who has found much relief through the above technique.

Reply

ParthChoksi

September 8, 2011 at 1:01 am

No, they do not suffer from hyperventilation as it is natural increase in rate of breathing to exhale higher amounts of carbon dioxide produced due to higher physical activity.

Reply

ParthChoksi

September 8, 2011 at 1:01 am

No, they do not suffer from hyperventilation as it is natural increase in rate of breathing to exhale higher amounts of carbon dioxide produced due to higher physical activity.

Reply

Vishnu

July 27, 2012 at 3:47 pm

Yup, you are right. Practicing any form of 'Pranayaama', the process you explained as deep and fast inhalations and exhalations, without the help and guidance of someone who knows the process inside-out can and will cause problems. Even psychological problems. So be careful with Pranayama, folks. I had my doubts about this whole thing. Anyways, if some people feel better with AOL I am happy for them.

#8.27

Rounak

November 12, 2010 at 6:19 pm

I have experienced No. 1, 2 & 7 from your list.
Its sad that most of the people consider these effects as 'divine experience' or 'samadhi'.
No neutral research is conducted on this Kriya. Only AOL supported doctors gave biased report.
Jago India Jago.

Reply

#8.28

Prasanna Ragothaman

May 5, 2017 at 12:57 pm

i think sudharsan kriya is cult practice, which reduces supplyh of oxygen to brain, it causes confusion, it effects making decision

Reply

#8.29

Debjyoti

May 31, 2015 at 12:30 pm

The problem lies with the teacher who is teaching the technic. I first gone through the course in Kolkata in 2000. The teacher who taught me (name is not being mentioned to avoid complications) told to breath with force for SKY which resulted immediate shoot up of my BP. Then I stopped it then and there. But after 13 years when I got transferred to Delhi in 2013 and out of my curiosity I went to the AOL class here, surprisingly the technic they told is very slow and repeatedly told me not to force the breathing in any technic other than Bhastrika. This produced the result.
What I feel AOL should distribute Video of the right technic rather than leave to their teacher some of who doesn't know at all about the correct technic which is not only endangering the life of some person but also spreading bad news about the AOL.

Reply

#8.30

Girish

November 6, 2014 at 5:38 pm

Parth Choksi,
Thank you for this blog. You are doing a very right thing by this blog..

Even I am feeling awkwardly uneasy in my brain and body after doing the AOL sudarshan kriya last evening. I mean it is very difficult to explain how I am feeling from inside but one thing is very clear to me that whatever my body and mind is experiencing is NOT GOOD at all by any angle. This is what I am experiencing:

1. Uneasy in my brain (Mind)
2. Dull feeling in mind and body.
3. Loss of appetite.
4. Vomiting like feeling all the time.
5. Emotional uneasiness.

I will NOT recommend it to anyone in this world and NOT even to my ENEMIES.

One thing that surprises me is that HOW CAN ONE LET SOMEONE TO PLAY WITH THEIR INNER SOUL, MIND AND BODY TO BE ABUSED BY THESE ART OF LIVING PEOPLE.

My sincere request to all is that your body, mind and soul are too sacred and fragile to be given in hands of people who are obsessed by their own so called techniques. How can these AOL people even dare to introduce SUDARSHAN KRIYA to people who are freshers and new comers.?

God save people who try these DANGEROUS MIND INFLUENCING TECHNIQUES.

Reply

#8.31

Soumen

May 12, 2017 at 9:10 am

Did you go to any doctor after your side effects of Sudarshan kriya? Please let me know as I am also suffering

Reply

#8.32

Shankar Sreekumar

September 12, 2019 at 9:50 pm

I did my AOL part 1 course in February 2005 .It was good in the beginning .I became so attractive physically.I was thrilled with the new thing in life.But later on i started to become more irritable,hyper sensitive to others,i was mentally down easily,others'behaviour were intolerable for me and I started to become so much disturbed over others issues,i was less forgiving,i lost my focus in life,i could not concentrate on day to day works,i lost interest in everything ,i was always thinking about unwanted factors of life,my family almost abandoned me because of my attitudes,i had serious fights in family frequently .In 2013 i was diagnosed with broad spectrum schizophrenia and by that time I did 9 years of sudarsanan keriya practice and yoga almost regularly.The damage was beyond correction.I stopped doing priya in 2013 and in 2016 i was with full blown symptoms of schizophrenia and diagnosed with paranoid schizophrenia and now under life long treatment.Sudarshan kriya causes serious mental problems depending upon the capacity of people.It is not advisable for everyone.Please refrain from regular practice if you are having any of these negative symptoms.I ended up in mental hospital doing Sudarshan Kriya.So please beware.

Reply

#8.33

Jone Moore

December 15, 2010 at 11:15 am

Hi Parth Choksi,
You are 100% correct Sudarshan Kriya of AOL is having lot of harmful side effects.
I practiced it for some time.
I noticed the harmful side effects of Sudarshan Kriya on my body and mind.
I left that.
Thanks for your posting.

Reply

#8.34

Riya

February 16, 2011 at 12:58 pm

Thank you for posting this. I too was not comfortable with the Sudarshan Kriya. It seemed too intrusive.

Reply

#8.35

Madhusudan deshmukh

August 14, 2011 at 11:23 am

Hi i also experiance above problem and i become more careless about my study.

Reply

#8.36

name1

August 18, 2011 at 5:38 pm

how to get over with these side effects? just by leaving it doesn't solves the problems it created. i feel demotivated, depressesd, rejected, and emotionless if i try leaving sk. the previous natural emotions and motivations have seem to be lost somewhere and i cant get them back. pls help

Reply

#8.37

Anon

December 13, 2011 at 10:00 am

Thank you for posting your experience! I used to be regular with my SK for about a year during 2009 and during that year I could feel myself experience all of those points you have listed above. I thought I was just being silly since all the research on the net on SK was positive. I felt a loss of memory and a general feeling of disinterestedness. As soon as i would stop, I would regain my emotions. I did the course again this year and then completely stopped. Recently, I had decided to stop it completely and dissociate myself from the AOL as I have neglected my studies and generally went off track in life. For a while after stopping it, I felt a lot irritation and agitation and restlessness but I feel like I'm finally becoming my old self again.

Thank you again for sharing this with us.

Reply

#8.38

MB

December 23, 2011 at 2:46 pm

Has any one got the solution to the problems caused BY SKY ? .I practiced this kriya only during the scheduled course .And since then whole head area is numb .its almost a week and i have still not been able to recuperate from the situation.

My ability to think critically has gone down / it is giving me difficulty in managing my task at office smartly.Feeling so low and dejected. Would realy require some kind of assurance on the part that i will recover from this numbness that i m feeling……..please reply what has to be done.

Reply

ParthChoksi

December 23, 2011 at 11:04 pm

exercise, cardio for quick recovery. Or else with time it will gradually go

Reply

Kumar K

January 4, 2012 at 12:48 pm

Hi,
I'd like to share my experience of doing S-Kriya. When I first started doing S-Kriya (Sudarshan Kriya), I used to feel especially tired, esp after the weekly session. I would collapse as soon as it got done. Often I experienced strange non-explainable sensation of fear of dying, or just highly tired. In fact the only way I could do it was to do the evening one, so I could rest and sleep the night – was very tired. Then I got the intuitive thought that this Kriya should be done in a "lazy manner" so to speak – that is gently and almost as if you don't care (SSRS used the phrase "like handling a flower"); so there I sat, and started at times to just go through the motions. I followed that course of action for about 3 months. And it was after that time (about 9 ~ 12 months since I started) that I began to experience what others were ooh-and-aaah'ing about – the freshenss feeling and also experience my thoughts (mind chatter) slow to a whisper. Overall took me a year to feel fresh and refreshed after S-Kriya, and a lot of trial and error effort – which in my case was mostly reducing the effort I put in my breath cycles.
Bottom line is that even with my irregular practise, I've now been able to accomplish a few things with limited sleep (I have 2 small kids now) – managing a brown belt in martial arts, an MBA and holding and making progress in my technology job, when I often find 6 hours of sleep is plenty with a daily dose of S-kriya.
The reason I share this, is that I can relate to the "fatigue" and more extreme sensations some of you have reported and wonder if perhaps you should experiment with checking what you are doing that is pushing your body farther than its limit at this time. I hope this experience of mine can help you along …

I'll look to your comments, to see if anyone here can try for a period of time (about a month or 4 weekly sessions) with experimenting on the lines that I tried, and report back on your experience.

God bless!
K

Reply

#8.40

Aatmajyoti arya

April 4, 2012 at 12:34 pm

I have been continously suffering from the “absent-mindedness” and to be true the 22 years of my life i had been in same condition.
Feeling insecure,Miserable,Low self esteem and No affinity towards life.I lost my job the one i deraly loved,Got into depression and even thought of ending up life.
But then i thought of giving this thing a try before taking a final decision but to my amazement i feel life is worth living! I feel so free from the mental disturbance, also very much confident and friendly.
I have had the powerful experience of SKY… i feel the pain in joints you are talking about. But it has also brought relief and with every sudarshan kriya i see that the pain is reducing ,much like fading away and my sleep hours have reduced (i was a very lazy girl).
So i request all of you to do the kriya for some more time regularly and then take a final decision.
I am a “live” example of SKY Effects and trust me if you are missing it ,You are missing something really precious.
and for heaven-sake … dont borrow other’s opinions.. Not even mine! please use your own experience and brains .
Thank you 😊

Reply

#8.41

sanjay_m

May 3, 2012 at 5:16 pm

Yes, Parth you r right. S kriyra produces lots of unpleasent feeling.Mostly it is due to forceful breathing.But when u breathe with observation & without any judgement, there is lot of pleasent feeling.You can observe your body parts,minute parts and just observe.Each part of my body,(cell) is contributing to “me” and feeling of “I” get dissolved.Problem is we are getting carried by sentiments of some personality or organization & that leads to ulitmate failure or pain or suffering.

Reply

#8.42

Sidd..

May 7, 2012 at 6:51 pm

Mine experiences were also like yours. i did SK for more than 2 years and had same above mentioned experience. i was told that my negativity is releasing, satva is increasing, guru is coming in your life…and many more. i thought, may be all these points are correct but even after three years of regular practices- followed by 3 advance course and 2 DSN, and a lot of time wasting SEWA (Sewa in AOl is bringing more poeple in) i was having the same experience. i regularly went for follow up for more then 10 months but found no change. i become very numb, dry. i still feel that dryness in me, still i find it difficult to focus on anything. Actually the reality is in AOl no one has ever experienced any thing, they all live by others experiences and try replicating it by behaving in the same pattern.
they create a surrounding and don't let others think beyond that … people in AOL rarely believe in self improvement ..

Reply

#8.43

MS

May 30, 2012 at 12:00 pm

Dear All,
I have been doing Short SK for last 7 years continuously. Why Short SK? Coz I hate the AOL folks and their "fakeness", but that does not take away the benefits of SK. I do SK for 20 mins , then recite Gayatri Mantra and sit quietly for 10 mins immediately after a bath in the morning. Has done wonders for my mental health. One side affect. Even if i stop for a day, I start getting agitating for smallest things! Otherwise my memory has improved, I am motivated, aggressive at work and happy. I have moved from a Software Engineer to an Associate Director! No credit to AOL but all credit to SK. So there you go, this is an unabiased feedback.

Reply

#8.44

Vikram

September 4, 2012 at 6:22 pm

Well even I have experienced the negative effects – not exactly due to the kriya but probably an already persistent condition which got aggravated by the kriya . All these magical stories of body healing , BP normalizing , Sugar within control , asthma cure , heart problems disappearing so on and so forth didnt happen to me at least. while I first did the kriya I got extremely scared and my whole body felt a feeling of numbness.. I have read in many hindu scriptures that if all these meditation techniques are not done under the able guidance of a guru , the whole brain could get affected as the kundalini force would be thrown into imbalance due to incorrect breathing.

. Since the experience was most traumatic , I left it after some time despite assurance from the AOL instructors to keep going. After that , I consulted a clinical psychiatrist and now after 2 years of medication ,extremely normal and living a fulfilling and contented life . I realize that in god's creation all 5 fingers are not the same , so AOL practitioners prescribing the same technique to all may not be in fact correct as it could trigger a mentally afflicted patient if not guided properly. And I believe there is no point in forcing the body against its wishes. The idea of coaxing one to continue despite feeling miserable was not correct on the part of the instructor .i dont blame her but she had been instructed to teach this way,

Also I believe strongly in Prarabdha and Karma. If you are bound to suffer you will suffer , You cant act against nature by these so called quick fix techniques to heal all kinds of diseases,. The best is Karma Yoga …Do your duty and the results will take care of itself . let us not get carried away by the so called magic techniques and end up in misery.

Reply

Pratiksha G

November 24, 2012 at 9:51 pm

hey parth Pratiksha here. . just few dayz bck i did d AOL course nd i was expressing all d symptoms similar to u.. though my situation has became a bit better now bt thn too .. evn tody i feel less intersted in life.. feeling less.. aas if i dnt love myself.. yep nd negative thoughts come easily in my mind.. nd m nd able tp feel hunger nd all plz can you help me out how to get normal .. i wnt to become normal as soon as possible i hav stopped doing all the kriyas.. plz help me dear.. :'(i evn contactd aol teacher bt he just said.. continue u wil b normal soon .. plz guide me dear.. i need ur help..

Reply

ParthChoksi

November 26, 2012 at 10:43 am

Hi Pratiksha. Cardio and exercise will greatly improve body and mind. it will also help you gain the appetite and also become more active in life. Exercise is not only good for body but also mind as it improves brain functions and also lifts the mood.

Reply

#8.46

Mohit

February 10, 2014 at 7:43 pm

Thanks for the above discussions….finally I found something which I could relate to. I did 1st part of the course and hoped to make this a part of my routine in addition walking and warm up exercises. Unfortunately results were strange. Whenever I did these exersises, the whole day I feel dull, irritated and without any motivation. On the contrary if I follow just my old routine of walking and light exersises, I feel energetic throughout the day.

Having said that, it's good if some people get benefits from such breathing techniques. Like there are differences in opinion so there can be differences in results.

Just want to add one more thing. During the course my teacher told me that negative enery gets released. When I asked how do you ensure only negative enery gets released and not positive. He had no answer, said something's you experience and rest you will have to believe….

Reply

#8.47

naresh

May 23, 2014 at 7:22 pm

Hello every one iam naresh who did basic course of long sudarshan kriya and continued for doing 1 year after i left that course because busy life when i stopped for just 15 days it is ruined my brain and addicted in doing so then i do for 4-5 days after it is peace full for 7 days then again iam very stressful with severe head pain then again i did it for4-5 days then it is peace for 7 days plz any body help me how to escape from this long sudarshan kriya…..

Reply

#8.48

padmakumar

October 25, 2014 at 9:58 pm

Hi,
I am also experiencing side effects of SK. For the first day it was very good feeling. Did continously for 2 weeks. And i stopped it for 1 week due to cold. But after that i started experiencing side effects. Now my anxeity has increased a lot. My mouth area is feeling very hard some times. Now i am into lot of health issues. Does anybody found a way for side effects?

Reply

#8.49

Jithin

January 24, 2015 at 5:03 pm

Hii Parth

Even i am facing many problems after doing this AOL course. Its just a stupid thing. These days am getting much more sleep that too whole day.So Parth what did you do to overcome these problems. Can anybody sujjest me.

Reply

#8.50

DK

April 17, 2016 at 9:06 pm

I HAVE A HEADACHE AFTER SK , I AM DEPRESSION

Reply

#8.51

dhinesh dhinesh

May 2, 2018 at 8:49 pm

I am experience the same.it is been two weeks. I cant do any activity. How did you solved it.

Reply

#8.52

Negative effects of Sudarshan Kriya!

Posted on December 23, 2010 by Ach. Agyaatadarshan Anand Nath

AD,

I was practising Art of living's Sudarshan Kriya for 12yrs, without giving even a day's gap. some of the problems that I faced were :
Poor memory,
Absent mindedness,
Intellectual disability – Could not comprehend or respond to anything. Mind would go blank
Low Self esteem
Lack of interest in life, No enthusiasm, always depressed.Low energy.
I stopped practising SK almost a month ago. My memory has slightly improved. My interest in life is back.

Please let me know what I need to do to recover completly.

– Amy

#8.53

Mahi *says:*
December 26, 2011 at 12:11 am

Dear AD,

I did basic AOL course.I did SKY 6 times ,which included 2 log kriya and four short ones.the first week enjoyed the High or so called numbness of being dumb, But soon after i started to realise that my ability to think critically has gone down drastically.I am not able to take basic level decisions and this numbness in mind increases whenever I am in situations where decision making is required.Its almost six days when last i did that Kriya. I researched and found that this kriya is nothing but hyperventilation ,and tried inhaling repeatedly in a paper bag to restore the carbon dioxide level in in the blood.This gave me a quick relief But have not been able to recover completely .I still suffer from bouts of numbness specially behind the temporal area of the brain during the stress hours of the day and my ability to take decisions gets marred whenever this numbness stroke occurs.Please help as I am finding difficulty in fulfilling my official and personal responsibilities effectively.Have i suffered from some kind of damage .How long will it take to recuperate?

Reply

#8.54

konchok ishey *says:*
January 24, 2012 at 3:23 pm

i practiced sk two times in de basic course of art of living....wt i m experiencing after one month knw....my mind is kind of paralaysed!!! in de sense i could nt take any decision quickly....my mind bcome weak...my life become so dull....m experiencing very different life...
plz help me out..!!

quik response will b appreciated.

Reply

#8.55

MIHIR JOSHI *says:*
February 28, 2021 at 11:33 am

I just did 3 days SK workshop. After experienceing it I knew something is wrong with help of my limited knowledge of breathing techniques. And came to know this blog.
This, kind of saved me. Thankyou 🙏

Reply

Nimit Shukla *says:*

September 10, 2023 at 9:03 pm

Pranam, I did Sudarshan kriya recently and finished around 45 days or so of it. I was already doing Sadhguru's Shambhavi (Inner Engineering) but suddenly I felt bored or something. I'm not even sure how but I ended up being pulled to do SKY. And before it was very difficult for me to even go a day without doing Shambhavi (IE) but the first day of online Sudarshan kriya (SKY) I felt as though everything was ok even though we didn't learn SKY that day. I did notice that I was becoming more flabbergasted each time I did kriya but I chalked it up to being from the benefits of SKY reducing stress or something. And so I quickly enrolled into online sahaj samadhi by AOL too and did an offline Happiness program (Sudarshan Kriya) where for the first time we did the long kriya. And its been about a month and 2 or 3 maybe 4 long kriya's other than around 40 or so days of short kriya. Now I felt something was wrong with me because I started to remember why I had needed to learn Sadhguru's Shambhavi in the first place it was because long ago in 2016 I had learned one of the below 18 programs by AOL (intuition?) I think I can't be sure as all these years I had buried the memory so deep I didn't even remember I had done something by AOL before until doing SKY and it making my memory somewhat clearer for that perticular memory. Anyway since I'm not sure I'll put a disclaimer that maybe I did some other kundalini yoga back in 2016 or maybe I mixed SKY with some sandeep maheshwari simple meditation. In any case back then I was left with crippling depression and anxiety after doing those practices which felt amazing for the first few months and I could notice the benefits alright. But there was this underlying feeling that I noticed too late that it was all too good to be true. Which it really did turn out to be and I was never sad and somehow always smiling. I had all these "enlightening" experiences at the age of 17 and I was a perfect person which was more than I could've ever hoped for. But I don't even remember how somewhere along the way something went horribly wrong. Either I stopped being celibate which I was for a very long time due to the meditation practices then. Which is what I think happened. Anyway after that I was depressed for years and such crippling depression it was that I couldn't even speak properly my energy levels were so low. I think my body did heal even if some spiritual or mental damage may never be healed but even then it took too long and I was unimaginably miserable for over 4 years at the end of which one of my friends after hearing me talk about suicide in a clear way suggested that I do Inner engineering. And I have not been able to go without inner engineering since but now this happened and I'm seeing the same symptoms as back in 2016/17 now that I have stopped doing Sudarshan kriya and again doing Inner engineering. I want to stop all these things but I'm afraid if I couldn't live normally without inner engineering before that now my situation due to SKY may be even worse if I stop. Please let me know if there are any remedies. I can't trust anything too complex right away so please give some simple ones I can try and see for myself initially before getting into anything complex. I would really appreciate it as before all this yoga and stuff I used to be a normal individual and now I'm beyond messed up beyond repair – I don't think anyone can even understand the damage that has happened to me. If there are any vedic doctors who deal in this regard please kindly guide in such direction as well.

Many many thanks for any help.

Reply

#8.57

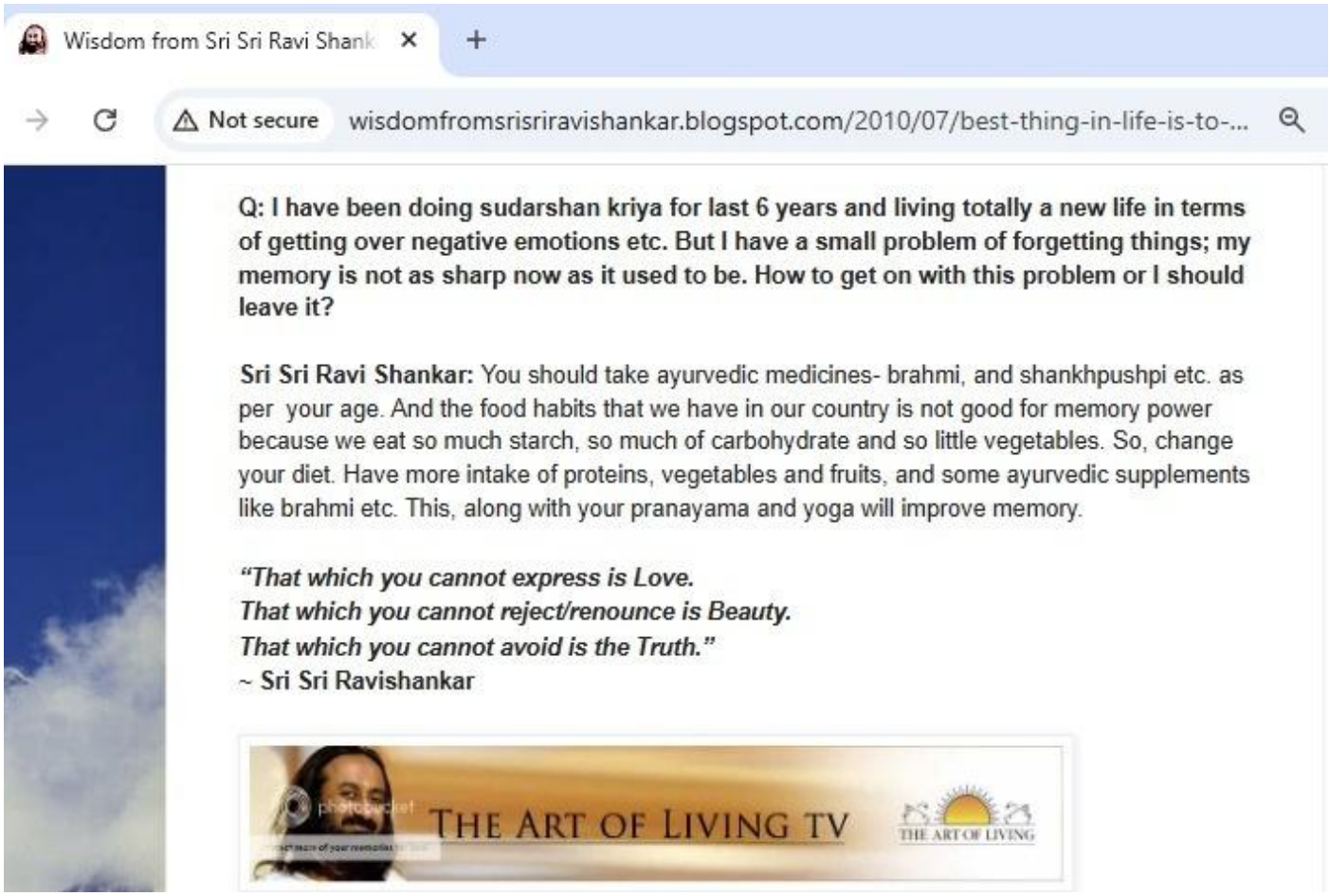
HB *says:*
November 11, 2024 at 12:40 am

thank you for sharing your experience.

I did the 3 day course and practiced sudharshan kriya for 20 days in row. Initially my head was heavy, I feel more tired, my jaws are really tight as the day goes by, I am feeling more depressed, no motivation at work, eating like crazy again, unable to control my eating disorder (which was a lot in control before sudharshan kriya), came to understand that by day 15 I hit the depression again.
today I just started thinking why I went backward after all my efforts to make my life and health better and stated looking for feedbacks on sudharshan kriya. This post really helped me. I am stopping to practice imminently.
thanks a bunch.

Reply

#8.58


Wisdom from Sri Sri Ravi Shank
Not secure
wisdomfromsrisriravishankar.blogspot.com/2010/07/best-thing-in-life-is-to-...
Q: I have been doing sudarshan kriya for last 6 years and living totally a new life in terms of getting over negative emotions etc. But I have a small problem of forgetting things; my memory is not as sharp now as it used to be. How to get on with this problem or I should leave it?
Sri Sri Ravi Shankar: You should take ayurvedic medicines- brahmi, and shankhpushpi etc. as per your age. And the food habits that we have in our country is not good for memory power because we eat so much starch, so much of carbohydrate and so little vegetables. So, change your diet. Have more intake of proteins, vegetables and fruits, and some ayurvedic supplements like brahmi etc. This, along with your pranayama and yoga will improve memory.
"That which you cannot express is Love.
That which you cannot reject/renounce is Beauty.
That which you cannot avoid is the Truth."
~ Sri Sri Ravishankar
THE ART OF LIVING TV
THE ART OF LIVING

"Concentration, memory, and clarity form the architecture of thought. Some practitioners found these structures shifting after practice. Their accounts illuminate how hyper-arousal or fatigue can cloud cognition. These lessons call for balance between stimulation and stillness.

Gentle pacing and adequate rest restore lucidity, keeping meditation a path of insight, not confusion"

Reported Adverse Effects Domain 9- Digestive Health

SUMMARY OF ADVERSE REACTIONS AND SIDE EFFECTS

ACTUAL LIST OF ADVERSE SYMPTOMS REPORTED IN ONLINE REVIEWS AND COMMENTS:
STOMACH PROBLEMS, IBS, CONSTIPATION, BOWEL ISSUES, DIARRHEA

NUMBER OF CASES REPORTED:
AT LEAST 4 FOUND ON INTERNET. THERE ARE MORE SUSPECTED TO BE OFFLINE OR UNREPORTED ON INTERNET

INSTANCES OF ADVERSE REACTIONS AND SIDE EFFECTS REPORTED ONLINE

#9.1

sharath said...

thanks for this blog. i did sudharshan kriya for almost one year and was continously plagued by headaches and irritable bowel syndrome. i never had this problem before. i was under the impression that i was not okay and needed more purification. i did fasts and raw food diets. all this did help but still the symptoms persisted. i got my practise and sk rhythm checked by four aol teachers including a very serious one. they all felt i am doing the practise fine. one of the teacher suggested i use the mild ayurvedic laxative Triphala. that helped a bit. i soon realized that whenever i used to skip the practise of SK i used to feel better. last year i went for a one month trek in a south indian jungle. i completely forgot the practice of sk. i was in the best of health throughout. since then i have stopped sk and i am in the best of health.
hoverver i have felt guilty of not practising. thanks to this blog i know that many other people are having problems with Sk. it is not a magic wand afterall.

FEBRUARY 18, 2010 AT 12:44 AM

#9.2

I have learned sudarsnan kriya at a wellknown art of living camp.
But after doing sudarshan kriya for 1 month I started having severe constipation.. whenever I do sudarshan kriya my stomach feels like a vaccum sealed or air tight packet for next 2-3 days!!! I feel like my bowel movment is completely stopped! I have stopped sudarshan kriya since then!!

Show less

Raja PERMALINK

July 22, 2010 6:15 am

@pondering

"Though you and I might have left AOL but i certainly believe that there is still some abilities of discrimination left to not to blame whole foundation and not to disclose what is so sacred for someone else. "

What is so secret about all those AOL sacred secrets. What this blog has exposed is the outright plgiarism involved in the so called sacred knowledge of AOL. I have done EST (erhard seminar training) in late 70s in Cannada and while going through the AOL TTC and YES+ notes all i can see is they have lifted atleast 80% of the stuff from EST and Landmark forum. The same approach and techniques. Inspired by beat zen and Alan Watts, Wernard Erhard used to use exactly the same aphorishms in EST – 'accept everything and every situation as is','What you resist persists', 'dont be a fotball of others opinion' etc. I REPEAT EXACTLY the SAME Words. At least AOL should be honest to accept their sources. Honesty I guess is not part of their value system. In EST there was a technique of gazing at a partner's eyes to basically get rid of boundaries and understand inner chatter. This is used in most self help and tantra workshops. EST in a way were trendsetters as there are many people who follow their techniques. AOL got these techniques into their programs in 1989. They copied rishi Prabhakar who used EST in his Sidda samadhi yoga. Rishi Prabhakar was atleast honest enough to admit his indebtness to the sources. But in AOL it is claimed that these are revelead knowledge of Ravishankar.

About Pranayama and Sudarshan Kriya it is Yogi Bhajan's pranayama kriyas plus rebirthing exercise added. Padma Sadhana is raja yoga pranayama and asanas taught by Mahesh yogi and many many others. Exactly in the same order. And Sahaj is TM, a straight lift of his Guru's technique. I wonder what nonsense copyright bullshit these people are talking about. Why AOL people are getting so excited and paranoid about their teachings being exposed. And since they beleive that without their Guru's grace nothing of these will work why are they so bothered. I would suggest that they should relax and take life less seriously instead of getting all excited and creating so much stress for themselves.

ajay *says:*
September 8, 2012 at 11:23 am

Guru Ji
I started SK Part -1 in October 11 and I started have problem of diarrhea from November 11. After taking lot of medicines, there was no improvement and finally I was dignosed with Ulcerative Colitis in Jan 12. Since then I am on medicines but condition is not improving. I don't know it started with SK or not. Could you please advise me what sort of yoga should I do?

Reply

"The gut is often called the second brain. Breath rhythms influence its tides of digestion. The voices that follow describe discomforts and changes that invite greater dietary and energetic awareness. These reflections show that even spiritual practices depend on simple bodily care -nutrition, hydration, and moderation. Harmony in the stomach sustains serenity in the soul"

Reported Adverse Effects Domain 10- Pregnancy & Menstrual Health

SUMMARY OF ADVERSE REACTIONS AND SIDE EFFECTS

ACTUAL LIST OF ADVERSE SYMPTOMS REPORTED IN ONLINE REVIEWS AND COMMENTS:
PREGNANCY COMPLICATION, CONCEIVING PROBLEMS

NUMBER OF CASES REPORTED:
AT LEAST 3 FOUND ON INTERNET. THERE ARE MORE SUSPECTED TO BE OFFLINE OR UNREPORTED ON INTERNET

INSTANCES OF ADVERSE REACTIONS AND SIDE EFFECTS REPORTED ONLINE

#10.1

exaolteacher PERMALINK

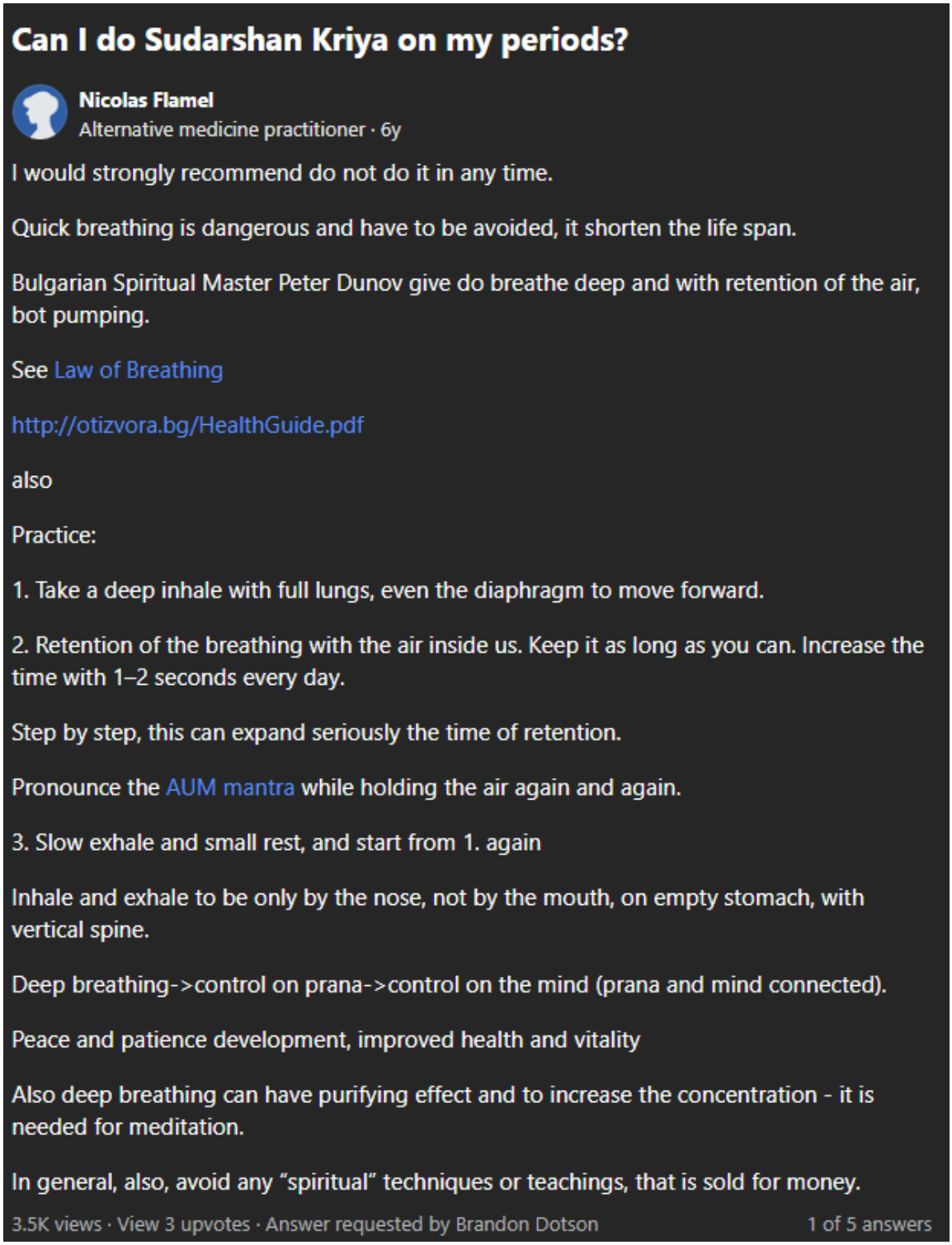
July 22, 2011 2:35 pm

I also know a lot of cases who developed similar problems as mentioned by Nagesh. In fact I have also found that some female practitioners had developed problem in conceiving and in several cases also reaching early menopause. When I spoke to some so called senior teacher regarding this problem they told me that it is all due to divine plan . These SK practitioners are here on earth to serve the master rather than bearing child.

#10.2

Aggravating-Name-780 • 17h ago

A very sad incident happened in the Canadian ashram... after a silence course meditation, one of the long time teachers stood up (she had been pregnant for many months) , and her water broke. She was not yet full term and the baby could not be saved. She spent some time with Sri Sri Ravi Shankar and no one knows what he told her, but she is still in Art of Living now.



Can I do Sudarshan Kriya on my periods?

Nicolas Flamel
Alternative medicine practitioner · 6y

I would strongly recommend do not do it in any time.

Quick breathing is dangerous and have to be avoided, it shorten the life span.

Bulgarian Spiritual Master Peter Dunov give do breathe deep and with retention of the air, bot pumping.

See Law of Breathing

http://otizvora.bg/HealthGuide.pdf

also

Practice:

1. Take a deep inhale with full lungs, even the diaphragm to move forward.

2. Retention of the breathing with the air inside us. Keep it as long as you can. Increase the time with 1–2 seconds every day.

Step by step, this can expand seriously the time of retention.

Pronounce the AUM mantra while holding the air again and again.

3. Slow exhale and small rest, and start from 1. again

Inhale and exhale to be only by the nose, not by the mouth, on empty stomach, with vertical spine.

Deep breathing->control on prana->control on the mind (prana and mind connected).

Peace and patience development, improved health and vitality

Also deep breathing can have purifying effect and to increase the concentration - it is needed for meditation.

In general, also, avoid any "spiritual" techniques or teachings, that is sold for money.

3.5K views · View 3 upvotes · Answer requested by Brandon Dotson 1 of 5 answers

"Breath connects mother and child, cycle and season. Here are accounts from women who practised during pregnancy or across hormonal transitions. Their stories highlight the need for tailored guidance and safety. Respect for the feminine body is reverence for creation itself.
Let these narratives urge organizations to publish clear prenatal and menstrual guidelines, ensuring that breath remains a blessing, never a burden"

Chapter 04
Adverse Effects Amplifiers - Conflicting & Inconsistent Guidance with Missing Health Risk Precautions

"Practice does not exist in isolation; it is transmitted through words, teachers, and marketing. This chapter examines how inconsistent instruction, inadequate screening, and silence about risks can amplify otherwise manageable effects. It invites accountability without accusation"

SUMMARY OF ADVERSE REACTIONS AND SIDE EFFECTS

ACTUAL LIST OF ADVERSE SYMPTOMS REPORTED IN ONLINE REVIEWS AND COMMENTS:

HALF KNOWLEDGE OF PRANAYAMA, NEGLIGENCE IN INFORMING HEALTH DISCLAIMERS BEFORE INSTRUCTING PRACTICE OF PRANAYAMA AND SUDARSHAN KRIYA YOGA DURING COURSE, FOLLOW UPS, ADVANCE COURSE AND INTRO TALKS.

NUMBER OF CASES REPORTED:

At least 51 found on internet. There are More suspected to be offline or unreported on internet

INSTANCES OF ADVERSE REACTIONS AND SIDE EFFECTS REPORTED ONLINE

#11.1

Princesspoi84 • 2mo ago • Edited 1mo ago

*everything i post is obviously my opinions based on my own personal experience at the AOL. And these opinions are based on what i personally saw, witnessed, or experienced, and based off of my limited knowledge of being there for 3 months I have come up with my own perception and I've been trying to piece together what happens there based on others experience from leaving, and i truly believe that everyone has a right to know all these things about the AOL. There's no evidence except the what they have put out... they don't tell anyone how sky breath has contraindications, and that it can potentially harm you, you state here we have a choice, you're right we do. However, when and organization omits pertinent information, they are quite literally making it to where you don't have choice. Because how can I choose if I don't have all the information to keep me safe?

Not to mention, while I was there as a sevite i was very much pressured for months to do the kriya because I knew the breath had contraindications, I inquired about it during my stay as I'm a yoga teacher by trade, and I was told that because this is a kriya and not pranayama, that there are no contraindications, and that this kriya will 100% cure ALL ailments. And just for clarity, it wasn't just my teacher / seva coordinator that said these things, it was several members of the staff and many teachers constantly pressuring me to do this breath work, and the verbally told me specifically to just sit with it being uncomfortable, and that if I just keep doing the kriya it will eventually feel good in my body! EVEN THOUGH I TOLD THEM NUMEROUS TIMES IVE HAD SEVERAL TIAs and that this kriya could literally kill me!!! They didn't care.

Just do nadi shodina or moon breathing technique to help sooth your nervous system. Plain and simple. Sit with nadi shodina (the alternate nostril breath) is very safe the only contraindications are if you have any sinus issues or maybe deviated septum it may not work for you, so the modification would be to learn the technique without actually closing the nostrils and only 'close' the nostril in the mind i guess you could say, and think of the technique while breathing. prana follows chitta. So where the mind goes the prana will follow. If that breathwork doesn't resonate, the bumblebee breath may. Contraindications being that closing the eyes and ears may trigger someone with severe ptsd or anxiety so you don't have to do that if it makes you uncomfortable.

Hope this helps.

#11.2

Anonymous PERMALINK

July 28, 2011 11:33 pm

In a mega course in San Jose two years back, a senior AOL teacher Sangeetha Jani asked people with heart problems, High Blood Pressure and one more problem (which I forgot), not to do the short cycles in the long kriya. This was in a part one course assisted by several other AOL teachers.

It was surprising to know about this as it was never mentioned by other teachers in their courses.

Another interesting fact is that Ravi Shankar himself does not do this long kriya but does other standard yogic practices. If you liken this to a Doctor who doesn't take all the drugs he/she prescribes, then Sudharshan Kriya could be a drug.

Almost all senior AOL teachers and most of other teachers are rarely found doing SKY. They seem to know the ill-effects.

I am sure Ravi Shankar himself knows the dangerous sides of long kriya. That could be the reason he came up with a milder version two years back.

It is true that many people have benefitted from Sudarshan Kriya but there are others who don't share the ill-effects of SKY as they are probably out of AOL.

Though it appears to be beneficial in the short term it definitely seems to be having long term problems as discussed in this blog. This is another characteristic of a drug.

#11.3

Surinder Singh · Jan 9

I consider teachers are of low level and mad.Their main aim is to extract money from your pockets as much as possible.

#11.4

Andú – *May 19, 2012, 2:39 PM*

Dear all,

I took the YES+ course from the Art of Living. I didn't encounter anything sectarian. I'm not affiliated with the foundation.

Daily Kriya has helped me a lot with the severe depression I was going through.

What I found strange is that instructors didn't give us much information about how the technique actually works. When something is safe, it shouldn't be kept secret. The instructor seemed either suspicious or uninformed.

I feel fine, and the practice doesn't conflict with my beliefs. But I still want to know more. The course didn't answer many of our questions.

I'm not for or against it—I just want to be sure that what helps me now won't hurt me later.

Dr. Anonymous, could you share links to reports from former instructors who suffered health problems from Sudarshan Kriya? Or studies showing risks? That would really help those of us practicing in good faith.

Thank you and best wishes.

Surinder Singh · Dec 11

Sir, I done paid online meditation and breath workshop recently now.I asked them how to measure duration of long,medium and short breath in sudarshan kriya.They have no answer.They don't know the medical implications of their spirtual products.I don't understand the meaning/duration of long,medium and short breaths and teachers are unable to describe this.So i can not do sudarshan kriya confidently .

#11.6

Source: **http://www.artofliving.org/best-gift-wisdom**

> ***Q**: Can people diagnosed with bipolar condition do Sudarshan Kriya or the Silence Course?*
> ***Sri Sri Ravi Shankar:** I don't advice them to attend the Silence Course, but they can attend the Basic Course and do everything **except Sudarshan Kriya**. Simple meditation, pranayam and some yoga is very good for them. They should do Sri Sri Yoga.*

Sadyojatha named a former AoL teacher who he claimed was a bipolar sufferer, it is evident from reading this letter that Art of Living encouraged this former teacher to practice SK in spite of her allegedly suffering from SK. Indeed, the Swami makes it sound as if SK was the one thing which helped her to control and compose herself, and that when she wasn't practising, that's when her troubles were at their peak.

What this tells us is that at least up to the time the letter was written, August 2010, Art of Living were unaware that SK can be harmful to those who have been diagnosed as suffering from bipolar. In other words, this clearly shows that insufficient research had been done between 1982 and 2010 to determine at least one of the harmful effects of SK, and that this only came to light subsequently. Because since 1982, Art of Living have been publicly teaching this technique to anyone who attends their Basic Course – without taking into consideration if they suffer from bipolar.

I can further add to this that during the entire time I was with Art of Living, I had (and still have) a friend who suffers from bipolar and who I was trying to convince to do the Basic Course. I told many teachers about his condition, and they all urged me to bring my friend to the course because they strongly believed that SK would help to treat bipolar.

Yet now all of a sudden we are being told that SK is not suitable to those who suffer from bipolar. If this is the case, then one cannot help but wonder, with all this purported research Art of Living claim to have done on this technique how on earth did it take them nearly 30 years to discover this? And if it took 30 years for them to discover this one thing, what other harmful effects still remain to be discovered? Can they honestly still claim that "side effects, if any, are only positive"?

Based on this information, Art of Living have actually presented us with TWO conflicting views regarding the practice of Sudarshan Kriya. On the one hand we are told that “officially” those who suffer from bipolar disorder should NOT practice Sudarshan Kriya (see quotes above and now the SK notes), whilst on the other hand one of the seniormost teachers in Art of Living, Swami Sadyojatha, has told us something radically different in his letter (link above) where he defames the former teacher which he accuses of suffering from bipolar. A letter which must have been sanctioned by Sri Sri Ravi Shankar himself otherwise it would not have been allowed to be published. So was this really means is that RS is contradicting himself on something which is an extremely serious issue. In other words, he is lying.

All of which still doesn’t help us, because we still don’t know the truth about SK with regards to bipolar, and most likely we will never know.

#11.7

Anonymous PERMALINK

June 9, 2012 10:42 am

Very interesting post; If they were so sure about the non existence of harmful side effects of SK they would have paid for serious researchs that would have been published officially. And -regarding the teacher the swami mentioned-, I do not believe she had any problem at the time she started working for the organization, for RS wouldn´t have trusted a sick person the responsability of founding and running AOL branches -from zero- in 2 whole countries. You don´t give a plane to a pilot you don´t fully trust and who´s abilities you cant be sure of. If she became sick, maybe some of the processes she went through while working for AOL trigered her condition. I´ve done an extensive research on coercive manipulation and some people have developed a sicotic brake at the end of a “hot seat” processes, not to mention serious depression. If they knew she was bipolar, keeping her working for AOL was then very irresponsable on AOL´s side towards the rest of the people. Of course, after she left, the organization needs to raise defammatory suspicions about her because she was very important and credible and they don´t want anyone to believe her. Last, I wonder if some key teachers in the organization would succesfully pass a psiquiatric evaluation by now. Actually TEACHERS SHOULD PASS A PSIQUIATRIC EVALUATION BEFORE BEING ENTITLED AS SUCH, since it´s known that such possitions are favorite among sycopaths. Who knows how many wolves dressed as sheep are holding important possitions inside the organization?

#11.8

VSS PERMALINK

June 9, 2012 1:05 pm

@ The Doctor

Thank you for this post — though it moves me to tears. If you recall, I'd said in one of my first posts on this blog, that the person who brainwashed me — who was brainwashed by an AoL volunteer (his best friend) — had symptoms of bi polar depression. And, it saddens me beyond measure to confirm that SK has not helped the person at all. There's no change for the better — there are only signs of deterioration. At least I have an insight into this issue. He doesn't have this insight. There must be so many others who don't know. How can anyone possibly say that Mr. Ravi Shankar and AoL are even a bit humane? They have no mercy. Is this any way to treat human beings? Just because one is weak, should one be hunted? They are predators — heartless and ruthless predators. Just because of their lust for conversion, they hurt and harm unsuspecting people. They don't even inform people properly. And then they try to post using several IDs to abuse those of us who have been hurt — to discredit us and to silence us — so that they can go on hurting and harming people. Yes, there may be some good seva projects that are going on — but guess what — they are just the justification for this lust for conversion. And, this is not Hinduism. Hurting and harming people is not Hinduism. All those who are in AoL and converting people left, right and center — please stop this. Please think. I beg you to. Please don't surrender your inherent goodness to a dangerous cult and its leader. You may have good intentions but you're ending up destroying homes and human beings. Please wake up. Please don't convert people blindly — it's just not right.

#11.9

Why should schizophrenics not do Sudarshan Kriya? It is mentioned in their website. Does anyone have the official Art of Living answer?

Deepesh Deomurari · Follow

Senior Faculty at Art of Living Centre (Meditation Center) (2014–present) · 1y

Thanks for A2A

Sudarshan Kriya indeed is like a atom bomb to mental health issues. I am not sure, but I think it is opened for bipolar. But not sure for schizophrenics. Also if someone taking medicine containing lead then should avoid Sudarshan Kriya.

Understand that such powerful and strong process have some directions. Spirituality is not always safe. Sudarshan Kriya is safest way and it may be interfering with the treatments - or it has not been studied fully so schizophrenic can't do Sudarshan Kriya right now. But they can definitely do meditation

#11.10

Anonymous PERMALINK

July 28, 2011 11:33 pm

In a mega course in San Jose two years back, a senior AOL teacher Sangeetha Jani asked people with heart problems, High Blood Pressure and one more problem (which I forgot), not to do the short cycles in the long kriya. This was in a part one course assisted by several other AOL teachers.

It was surprising to know about this as it was never mentioned by other teachers in their courses.

Another interesting fact is that Ravi Shankar himself does not do this long kriya but does other standard yogic practices. If you liken this to a Doctor who doesn't take all the drugs he/she prescribes, then Sudharshan Kriya could be a drug.

Almost all senior AOL teachers and most of other teachers are rarely found doing SKY. They seem to know the ill-effects.

I am sure Ravi Shankar himself knows the dangerous sides of long kriya. That could be the reason he came up with a milder version two years back.

It is true that many people have benefitted from Sudarshan Kriya but there are others who don't share the ill-effects of SKY as they are probably out of AOL.

Though it appears to be beneficial in the short term it definitely seems to be having long term problems as discussed in this blog. This is another characteristic of a drug.

#11.11

Yes, Art of living group is doing a mistake, they are admitting those who are not eligible, this kind of incident will not happen if you pass plus 2 and check the entrance rank to study MBBS.

See original (Translated by Google)

#11.12

@redjilebion8763 2 years ago

It has been said that those with health concerns should not take the strain

See original (Translated by Google)

Practitioner PERMALINK

September 29, 2010 4:57 pm

20-40-40 kriya itself seems to be one of two things. Traditional bhastrika is sometimes done this way at varying speeds, this kriya seems to be a derivative of that. I don't have a BSY video, but the bhastrika that Ramdev does on his TV and youtube shows is similar. When I went back to one of my teachers at BSY and inquired about 20-40-40, he listened patiently and gave me a variant. Instead of the deep and forceful breathing we learn in AOL for the kriya, he told me to try the opposite way – do the 20-40-40, but breathe so gently, without any effort, the air is just floating in and out of your nose, there is a lot of awareness on the whole body. He also cautioned me to fine-tune this practice to suit **my** body type. We don't just do 20-40-40 all the time, I was taught how to listen to and sense the body's requirements all the time, and vary the breathing speed and depth as needed at the time.

I find that if I breathe this way, I am almost not even breathing, but the in-out breath is happening. There is a tremendous awareness, you have a very deep sensation of the subtle energies and changes happening in the head region and the open palms and later the whole body. Once the practice is done, I feel far more sensitive towards the body, very clear headed and refreshed. Thinking, reasoning and intellect are functioning at heightened awareness. It is very different from the slightly dazed or zombie type feeling after powerful bhastrika, wrong bandhas and long kriya.

My old BSY teacher also helped me clear some other conflicts. I asked about the crazy experiences of people screaming, crying and howling during their first kriya. He said he has seen similar problems when newcomers are rushed through some practices instead of gradually becoming accustomed to the practice in a gentle way. The example he gave me was someone who lives a sedentary life suddenly running a 42km marathon without practicing regular short distance runs before the event. I have never seen this happen in other proper yoga practices.

While I see that kriya helps many, from my experience I feel that it is very wrong to make every course participant do kriya and bandhas without knowing about their health in detail. Even then, the exact practice **must** be customised for the person depending on body type and health conditions. The way the bhastrika and kriya is taught in AOL seems to be a derivative work without much study about its long term effects. It is also very wrong to attribute any problem, pain or emotional upheaval to "detoxing" or "cleansing" as they say in AOL courses, as the AOL teachers do not seem to be trained or qualified to even understand all these symptoms and help them. I would advise people to be very cautious of blindly practicing it.

#11.14

Thanks for saving me PERMALINK

October 1, 2010 7:39 am

I agree that the way Bhastrika pranayam, SK and Bandha are taught in AOL, they could be dangerous. The secrecy all around it does not allow much of research on these practices.

#11.15

Researcher PERMALINK

October 4, 2010 2:21 pm

Roopali, if a practice consistently gives you headaches, palpitations, dizziness, eye pain, etc, then common sense tells us something is wrong and that it does not agree with you. It is the duty of any good yoga or pranayam teacher to figure that out in no time, and change the practice for you. Only someone who is ignorant and untrained would have asked you to continue just because they learnt it that way in the TTC.

As people have stressed, there is no “one yoga fits all” as AOL preaches. Kriya has benefited some and caused problems for others. AOL denies that. Therein lies the problem.

#11.16

Anonymous PERMALINK

June 11, 2012 9:37 pm

".....for example, people with high blood pressure, cardiac problems, epilesia, pregnancy, glaucoma, schizophrenia, also cannot take SK, to name a few"

It was a surprise to me when I heard from Sangeeta Jani in a mega course that people with high blood pressure, cardiac problems and epilesia should not do the short circles. That was 8 years after my first basic course.

I had done basic course many times and none of the teachers had mentioned about these things. Nor did I hear about these problems during other AOL courses and follow-ups.

#11.17

anonymus critical PERMALINK

June 12, 2012 7:53 pm

"Thus, there are many people who themselves are unstable and suffer of untreated psychological disorders acting as teachers"

Please have a separate post on this. This is one of key issue.

anonymus critical PERMALINK

June 12, 2012 8:00 pm

There are many teachers in AOL who have Personality disorders. They are not frank psychotics but have many traits of different personality disorders. Kindly devote a seperate post on this please.

Anonymous PERMALINK

June 12, 2012 9:48 pm

A friend of mine who´s a Forensic Psiquiatrist told me: "Psycothic teachers are something to worry about: Psycopath teachers are something to be scared about!".... AOL is plenty of them!!!

#11.18

Anonymous PERMALINK

June 13, 2012 4:02 am

"Teachers following the teaching instructions review each student's health form before the class starts"

I have seen only one teacher doing this. Most of the teachers are not aware of student's health because these forms are reviewed by their assistants who look only for student's signature freeing AOL of any consequences.

"they will give that person instructions for doing a modified version of SK."

The only modified version I have heard is skipping short circles. Are there other modified versions of SK.

#11.19

stupidseeker PERMALINK

June 13, 2012 5:21 am

One of the major dictums of modern medicine is "Do No Harm". What this means is that, it should be the aim of the healthcare system to not worsen the condition of the patient even if the applied intervention fails to improve the condition of the patient. This dictum in not a divine revelation or a divine personal insight and thereby unfalsifiable. It is the consequence of the philosophical discussion on the practice of medicine.

Given the ability of Yoga to effect physiological changes one wonders how qualified are the teachers in AOL to assess the impact of the yogic intervention in diverse individuals, healthy or otherwise, and also on what basis, even as they parade the innumerable health benefits of the SKY??
Given that mere demonstration of efficacy, which anyway is commonplace for most physical activities in general and yoga in particular, does not imply freedom from adverse effects, have they performed any controlled trials which demonstrate the safety of the SKY when practiced on the long term??

The Doctor PERMALINK

June 13, 2012 7:27 am

@Doreen,

"Teachers following the teaching instructions review each student's health form before the class starts so they're aware of any health issues that could be impacted by SK – things including heart conditions, high blood pressure, and asthma. If they have questions they will talk to that student before class starts to get any clarification needed. Some teachers make it a point to talk privately to each student before class starts to double-check that they haven't left anything off of their application form.

If a student does have one of the conditions on the list, they will give that person instructions for doing a modified version of SK.

That sounds reasonable to me."

Yes, this does sound reasonable. However this is an ideal situation which is clearly not happening in the real world. If this was happening *universally*, then people wouldn't be complaining of all the ailments which they have been. Even when I was in AoL I knew people who complained about various things, and teachers were always telling them to just keep practicing, that they are cleansing, removing toxins and so on. What this tells us is that very few teachers are actually following the teaching instructions.

It strikes me as interesting that you have chosen to completely ignore 99% of the issues which have been raised on this blog with regards to the harmful effects of Sudarshan Kriya and just focused on this.

The Doctor PERMALINK

June 13, 2012 6:39 pm

@Doreen,

"The ideal situation is for every teacher to always follow the teaching instructions to the letter.
Are there a lot of teachers who do this? I think so. In my experience teachers see their work as sacred service and so tend to take great care with it.
Is this happening 100% of the time? No.
Do either of us have a way of knowing exactly how many teachers do this? No.
Is 100% compliance possible when dealing with humans? Probably not but if AOL believes in the importance/value of the teaching instructions then they should be working towards it."

Whilst I agree that none of us can be sure how many teachers are and how many teachers aren't staying faithful to the prescribed teaching methods and taking care to observe all contraindications as laid out in the SK notes, the fact that so many people have reported problems when practicing SK tells us that there is a big issue when it comes to teaching SK. If AoL really believes in the importance/value of the teaching instructions, then they should be doing everything they can to ensure none of these things are happening.

They should at the very least warn people before they take the class of all the various contraindications, but many obviously don't. Why don't they? I believe I've made a good attempt to answer that in this comment, though I didn't hear anything from you on it afterwards. I would still like to hear your thoughts on this, because I think it is at the heart of the problem.

WhistleBlower PERMALINK

June 14, 2010 5:08 am

You are quite right John. This is increasingly happening all over the world. People are waking up to the fact that AOL is yet another scam. Sri Sri is increasingly focusing more on his existing flock to bring $$$ to him.
AOL has been bragging about big TTC courses in Ashram last few years, but the same cannot be said about the TTC courses in US & Europe, which are struggling.
And most TTC graduates don't continue with AOL. They see the light after a year or two.
Indeed if you look at the number of teachers who are leaving AOL, they are far greater than the numbers coming in. The situation has worsened in recent years, so in response SriSri has changed the training from two TTC of 15 days each down to one 21 day TTC. The pre-requisites have also been reduced considerably and with that the quality of teachers and their training. Anyone can become a teacher now as long as they can afford the TTC fees, which are getting higher and higher! And once they become teachers they are expected to bring more and more $$ to SriSri and AOL! As the number of teachers decreases there will be more pressure on the remaining ones to fill up SriSri's coffers!

Doreen PERMALINK

June 16, 2012 7:28 pm

@Doctor

It is already acknowledged in the SK notes that the full SK practice is not suitable for everyone. You can call that a shortcoming if you like in the same sense that apple pie's shortcoming is that it's not suitable for diabetics. It is not suitable for every health condition. The SK notes have a whole section on how teachers should determine, based on specific health conditions, whether someone should learn or whether they should learn a modified version. The notes also instruct teachers to review each participant's application form at least a day before the course starts.

In other words if there is a teacher teaching people SK who shouldn't learn it for health reasons, then they are violating the prime instructions that have been given to them as an AOL teacher.

I will not write any more about the SK notes but felt compelled to call out certain facts.

ex teacher PERMALINK

June 12, 2012 1:37 am

"... There is an official word on SK, and it includes the instruction not to teach fast circles to heart patients, and not to teach people diagnosed with bipolar who are on lithium-based medications. These are simply facts, whether they support your point or not."

Though it's correct what "Doreen" stated, problem is there are discrepancies even about how to facilitate and practice SK, cuz "some may support the point or not". Though instruction is people with heart problems should not do fast circles and should do it lighter, most teachers overlook this, because they have not received proper training, and, the stronger the "merrier". The stronger the breaths, the more catharsis there will be, ie. more yelling, more acting out, more twisting of hands, etc. More "experiences" to share, more drama, easier to convince participants the SK does something, and this is where they start feeding some magical thinking! Sadly, at that point, the person is hyperventilating and frying brain cells. Then, with the increasing demand and pressure from RS to get more people, and the endless competition between them (which RS feeds himself to get his numbers) really, how much careful supervision can participants get in large courses? Especially when most teachers (inexperienced even in life!) are walking on thin air and "surrendering" it all to the guru? Sad truth is most problems are overlooked and everyone gets put in the same basket and if you have problems as a consequence of SK, "well, it's your bad karma", "well, you did something wrong". And, most importantly, RS does not care whether they "support the point or not". He only cares about NUMBERS and getting BIG. Whether you get fried in the process or die, that's not his problem. It's your karma! After all, noone in AoL ever takes responsibility for any mistake. In fact, you start by clearing them from any responsibility by signing an agreement at the end of the form. That in itself needs to make you wonder, from that early on, what are they so eager to protect themselves from? What problems can this technique and course bring? Furthermore, it's not only poor or lack of real training and unlimited arrogance, but, has anyone seen RS practice SK?????????? I mean, to even get an idea of how it should be correctly done (since he claims to have "created" it)? Anyone? Fact: he himself does not practice SK. Let's wonder why, because regardless of how "enlightened" he could claim to be, his body is mortal and we all notice he is stressed and miserable! If he cannot walk the talk, then why even talk?

The Doctor PERMALINK

June 12, 2012 8:46 pm

@Doreen: *There's a curious dichotomy I've noticed among some comments on this blog. Some people say "SK is a sham, it does nothing for me" and some people say "SK is dangerous".*

In fairness, the majority of people who support this blog, myself included, claim that SK may have some benefits, but may also have harmful side effects. A large number of contributors here have come forward and shared their bad experiences on the blog. I don't think anyone has ever outright stated that they believe SK is a sham, though perhaps a very small minority do claim it does nothing for them.

One of the biggest issues with regards to SK is that Art of Living do not warn participants upfront of any of the harmful side effects, and worse still they do not even admit that SK has ever caused any problems for anyone. This is obviously completely untrue, and is something which seriously needs to be addressed. Whatever benefits SK may produce, if it is potentially dangerous to someone, shouldn't they be warned about it upfront?

ex teacher PERMALINK

June 12, 2012 3:59 pm

Doreen: it's not common practice to sign a waiver before taking a yoga class or personal development courses. I never did except with AoL! Ask around and you will see it is less common than what you think. If there is something to hide or protect, if something is not transparent, then an agreement is good for protection. AoL hides too many things and is too anxious to protect itself from just too many things! Including negative criticism. What is he so afraid of? There are too many secrets. "Don't tell, don't share, don't ...." That is the first indication it is a cult. Too many "no nos", too many secrets. He can't control everyone's opinions. Some will like him, some will not. Except, now, every negative criticism that floats around the world, he thinks it comes or was provoked by the teacher he defamed, and he will attack him/her. How childish, don't you think? How opposite of everything he preaches, don't you think? Some people don't feel any results with SK, and some people have fallen very sick from the practice of it. If you need a practice to have the energy and enthusiasm to do things in your life, well, you need to question why can you not do that without the help of a placebo? This is the flaw in the whole AoL package: it makes people rely on outside sources, instead of valuing, relying and believing in oneself more. But, he makes you believe you are. Fabulous! If you can't do any of that without the practice of it or RS, then it means all of that has no value at all!

PS: and, because you yourself make sure you follow instructions to facilitate SK, or have not seen anyone go "bad" because of SK, does not mean that is not happening too much elsewhere. Again, there are too many secrets in the AoL. There is life outside of the bubble.

Cheated by AOL PERMALINK

July 21, 2010 4:03 pm

This is a note of warning I want to give for people who engage with the ravishankr's AOL and their associated companies in business activities. I was cheated by AOL of 50 thousand rupees in 2000 when I used to sell telephone EPABX. It was a big amount of money for me at that time and I suffered personal crisis because of this. I had gone on a sales trip to AOL ashram on kanakapura road upon their enquiry for an telephone exchange product. I met with AOL officials Vinod Menon and Arun Mahadevan. Initially they agreed for our quotation and i supplied the equipment to them. But when it came to payment they started the story that AOL is a charitable organization. When i persissted on payment and one day even lost temper i was told I am stressed should attend the basic course and so on. They also said that AOL bank account is always zero and they have no income. any money they get they distribute it to the poor. All the while these people were building sumeru mantap in ashram costing crores of rupees and they said they have no money. I was emotionally blackmailed and hence attended the course. I even met ravishankar (I will never call him sri sri) and was introduced by Vinod menon who took me into his kuteer. Vinod Menon before that wanted me to get this money waived off. looking at all the pomp and paegentry of ravishankar I was carried away during the course and I waived the payment. only later when i had financial problem i realised that i was cheated. I know of one more friend who is a civil contractor who has been cheated by aol. but he cannot do anything because they are too powerful and we are superstitious about gurus.

Recently I know myself and some of my friends have been getting calls on supplying products and services with arvind exports and sri sri ayurveda. I am off it and I request people who want to involve with these people to be cautious about payments and money. Get the money upfront and do not fall for all the emotional bullshit stories they tell.

#11.28

ex-cultie

October 15, 2010 6:47 am

As someone else commented earlier on the process of kriya, I shared some concerns with an old friend of mine who has been a yoga practitioner, researcher, advocate and part time teacher for nearly 50 years. He tells me he's only come across the fast cycle type of SK breathing a few times, and that was to address some very specific temporary condition in the body. He's never seen this fast breathing practiced daily, as its long term effects when practiced daily have never been studied in detail, and that the impact on the body is quite immediate and rapid.

He advised me to do the 20-40-40 very gently and with very shallow breaths, not to try breathing too deeply or force it, and if possible, avoid the fast cycle completely.

This goes against the teaching in the basic course and the follow up sessions where most people do the 20-40-40 with great vigor and intensity, literally kicking up a storm.

I remember asking one of the basic course teachers about this many years ago. She pointed to kapalbhati and agnisara pranayam, saying that the medium and fast cycles were very similar. This struck me as very shallow, since the process for kapalbhati and agnisara are completely different from the 20-40-40 in SK. There is no breathing at all during the repetitions in agnisara. Kapalbhati focuses more on the stomach movements, the breath itself is secondary.

I wonder how AOL considers these teachers qualified to teach yoga and pranayama when their basic knowledge of this field does not go beyond what they are taught in AOL TTC courses, which is precious little about yoga itself and more about the different processes, marketing, hot seat and all that other stuff.

#11.29

Sudashan Panda PERMALINK

March 29, 2011 12:05 pm

By the way, at a part 1 course our teacher said "It is not possible to hyperventilate through the nose, so therefor Sudashan Kriya is not hyperventilation". Im only a layman, but I doubt the validity of that argument. Any opinions on that one?

#11.30

Nagesh PERMALINK

March 29, 2011 6:51 am

AOL teachers and old timers know quite a lot about the bad effects of Sudarshan Kriya. Some of them have experienced it themselves and stopped practicing. Being an ex-AOL teacher, I personally know several AOL teachers who do not practice Sudarshan Kriya as it does not suit them at all. Even Ravishankar does not practice sudarshan kriya, not because he is enlightened and all that BS.He practices regular yoga asanas and pranayama. I have seen him do yoga asana practice in Rishikesh during one of the camps in 90s. He does not trust his technique on himself as he very well knows how he cooked it up.

If any of you folks have studied AOL propoganda over the years, initially they used to pitch a lot on Sudarshan kriya. As years have progressed their conviction on the technique and more factual data on the ill effects were seen they have toned it down. Although they never tell this openely just catch any of the teachers in their unguarded moments they have lot of tales to tell on sudarshan kriya, and most of them not part of the official party line. The current AOL marketing pitch is that Sudarshan Kriya is one among the other techniques like Sri Sri Yoga, Suryanamaskara and Padmasadha. Of course they cannot completely remove the previous sales pitch of Sudarshan Kriya as it was such a success in roping in people.

#11.31

Anoop PERMALINK

March 28, 2011 10:37 am

In my AOL class, high BP patients were advised NOT to do fast short cycles and instead do medium ones (I may be wrong in the exact details, but this is what i remember)

#11.32

Dev PERMALINK

April 25, 2011 1:34 pm

I attended AOL foundation course . Whether SK is good or bad is beyond my knowledge , but I can very well say that AOL teachers simply do not understand medical science , they are bunch of good marketing folks

#11.33

Blossom PERMALINK

April 9, 2011 12:23 pm

If people with certain medical conditions/ pregnancy should not do kriya or do a modified version, it is not emphasized at all either in follow-ups or adv courses. Many things may develop later and a regular practitioner may not realize that it is harmful now. I had no idea about fast cycle/ vigorous bhastrika to be avoided in Hypertensives, about different posture in 3rd stage of pranayam for cervical spondylitis patients till I assisted courses. If someone is having bad experience/ symptoms, it makes sense to stop for a while and observe or have a full medical checkup than to brush it aside saying that toxins are being released!

Ronin PERMALINK

March 28, 2011 3:11 pm

In the manual they will refer to the Kriya notes. I am sure all the teachers will remember how we received those, we had to write them down and if you missed half of it (they read them so fast and would not go back)it was ok. We were told we got what we needed and the guru will always be with us when we were teaching. It created more of the mystique around the whole kriya of course at this point you were so far gone you believed it all, because you became one of the special ones.
But truly a spiritual technique which could have such effects on people as descibed in the notes should be given out very carefully. And lets hope that the remedies given will work. If you remembere them or wrote them down correctly

The point is that no matter what the kriya is always presented as a wonderful positive thing. And never with a disclaimer, like when you look at a tv commercial for a medicine, they will always tell you if you have certain conditions be careful. And they will tell you this beforehand.

I don't remember any Intro talk where all these conditions were discussed the focus was always on recruiting people. You had to sign people up first get them in, and have them pay. I do remember the disclaimer people had to sign, when they took the course, which basically stated that your taking this course at your own risk and that the AOL organisation can not be help responsible.

I wonder why a spiritual organisation would have people sign something like this.

anonymous PERMALINK

May 10, 2011 4:40 pm

When a relative was dying a few years ago, before lapsing into a coma, they began breathing very deeply, in what I counted out to be the 'middle' circles of breath as used in SK. We were all very concerned, and asked the doctor who replied that when people are dying, they often begin this type of continuous, rapid breathing, sometimes at various rates, first slow, then faster as we were witnessing in our relative, and even very fast. This puts them into a coma he said, which helps them to die. He was a hospice doctor. He said it is one of the mysteries of natural death, someone dying without respirators or feeding tubes. Indeed, this person continued to breath in "circles", continuously, for 48 hours! And then died peacefully. Other than during SK, it's the only time I've ever seen someone breathe like that, but all the nurses and doctors said it was fairly common at the end of life in hospice. I don't know what this means about hyperventilation, but it doesn't seem like it would be good. SK is hyperventilation, and produces all the symptoms of hyperventilation. The only 'research' that has been presented has been by doctors and researchers who believe in SSRS. So how can they be trusted? They want to be right. My own doctor, when I showed and explained what the SK was, said to stop immediately, that it was medically very dangerous to do something like this and would possibly cause long term damage. This doctor also recommended yoga practice, and practices yoga. I asked about other types of breathing and was told that in moderation all these yogic breathing techniques produce relaxation when done properly, but that SK, the 3 circles, done for 5 or 30 minutes, was very harmful and should not be done. That's just my M. D. who does not know HHRS. Anyone else here ever ask their doctor?

#11.36

Independent Observer PERMALINK

May 18, 2011 11:47 am

In a recently released Love Moves the world Video version the “Graduated in Advanced Sciences and Vedic Studies” has changed to Bachelors degree in Physics (not even Advanced Physics). I am told that this video was made in Europe.

I am not sure of the exact wordings used….can anybody verify ?.

Guys…things are actually changing……for better…..we are starting to become truthful now……

Someday, the compassionate Master will see his old teachers coming back ???

anonymous PERMALINK

May 18, 2011 12:08 pm

His classmates told me he flunked out of high school. He told me he left high school to follow Maharishi Mahesh Yogi at 17 and never went back and never got a degree. Was he lying then or is he lying now? Are his old classmates all liars? How weird.

#11.37

Anonymous PERMALINK

May 29, 2012 1:17 pm

Dr Peter, I did ask Ravi Shankar about my discomfort in SK and he told me I didn’t need to do it if I didn’t want to because I was so close to him. That seemed weird, since I was teaching others to do it. I also knew many teachers who didn’t do the practice because they were very uncomfortable with it. And these are names you would recognize if I said them here, which I won’t for fear of lawsuit. 😉

#11.38

Anonymous PERMALINK

May 26, 2012 6:11 pm

@ drpetersutphen

Does RS ever answer such questions either through email or in an open satsang? Pls watch his live satsangs to understand how he ignores critical questions. He is after all Your Master, drpetersutphen 😉 and evading questions is his area of expertise.

#11.39

Anonymous PERMALINK

May 26, 2012 10:09 pm

HI everyone! Even if the paper says “I don´t blame anyone for the practicing of SK” It should also say: I have been informed about the process denominated SK AND of unlike but possible side negative effects. Should I experience any of the latter I release everyone from further claims”... Or so I think...

#11.40

Abhilash Shastry PERMALINK

December 9, 2010 2:13 am

"A smiling teacher then tells them that they will get nothing from the course. Does that mean the teacher wants the participants to collect back their fees and leave?.. It means.. do the course with no expectations which is great knowledge indeed."

I remember an interesting incident about this. In most of the courses, when the smiling teacher tells the participants that they would get nothing out of the course, people see the message and laugh it away. However, in one of the courses that I organized at my place it did not unfold like this. Manisha Mehta was the teacher. As per the rehearsed script, after asking the participants to write down their expectations, she finally told that they would get nothing from the course. Then one person in the group got up and said that since he was going to get nothing in return, he wanted to leave and his money back. There was some commotion. Then another person got up...then another. It was very comic. The teacher did not know what to do. Clearly, she had expected the act to follow in some different pattern. She had herself not dropped her expectations. Then she started explaining them to experience the course without expectations etc. Some got convinced. A few did not. Finally, as a true AOL -ite she told them that those who wanted to go could go, but the money would not be refunded. Spirituality is OK but how can there be any compromise on money? First things first.

#11.41

anonymous PERMALINK

December 13, 2010 9:45 pm

How right you are, anonee about how rudely the "master" speaks to elders! One man I know went to meet SSRS at the ashram to ask him to send his son home. SSRS told him "if you cannot control your own son, what am I supposed to do?" The son, who was a teacher, and thinking of simply living at the ashram (invited by SSRS to do so), saw through the "master" and was shocked at what he saw going on. He left after a very short stay. In public SSRS says that we should respect elders. But in person he doesn't do this. He also often made fun of other people's parents if they were asking their sons or daughters to quite AOL. He is really a fraud guru and a fake 'master'. Stay away!

Practitioner PERMALINK

September 29, 2010 4:57 pm

When I moved to Bangalore with my family in the 2000's, AOL caught my attention and I attended some programs (basic and advanced courses) that I thought would give a little boost to my practice.

AOL pranayam and other breathing seemed to be derived from some yoga methods but some of the techniques are not meant for everyone, and some other methods are done in a wrong way. Bhastrika is traditionally done a little differently, more gently and for longer period of time, and there are many variations. The way AOL teaches it is very vigorous and can cause worsening of some health problems.

In advanced course you learn about the locks (bandha) after bhastrika. Most people feel a pressure in the head, slight dissonance and a funny feeling if you keep the lock for more than a few seconds, but in AOL we are instructed to hold it for as long as we can. This is because you are breathing **in**, holding the breath and compressing your neck and stomach, that puts pressure on some wrong areas of the body specially towards the head. The traditional way we were taught this lock is like this – breathe **out** completely, then apply the lock by lowering the head so that the chin touches the chest, suck in the stomach completely and also lock the perineum region. If you observe the sensations, you will feel more natural this way.

All along, I have been taught that any practice or posture that creates uncomfortable, dizzy, spaced out or light headed sensations may mean it is not meant for you, or you are doing it wrong, or you are not breathing properly. Here in AOL, the powerful bhastrika itself and later the locks can be very dangerous to some people.

The Doctor PERMALINK

October 10, 2010 9:24 pm

As fate would have it, I met a young lady this weekend who told me two very interesting things I want to share with you.

1) Some time ago, she started the AoL basic course, but on the second day she felt a little cough and a cold, and phoned up the teacher to tell him that she wasn't feeling well. The teacher persuaded her to come in, insisting that the practices they were going to do that day would be of benefit to her, especially in this condition. So she listened to him, and went to the course.

They did the 3-stage pranayams, during which she didn't feel too comfortable, but it was when she did bhastrika that she felt really nauseous at the end of it. When the teacher asked how everyone felt, my friend told him exactly what she was feeling, but the teacher completely ignored her and went on to the next person. My friend spent the whole of the next week feeling just as nauseous and her cold worsened. It took her several weeks to recover from this. She was horrified that the teacher had made these claims in the first place, and worse still that she made no attempt to acknowledge the mistake or admit any fault on his part.

I explained to my friend that in the past whenever I had a cold, I was told to especially do bhastrika as it would really help my conditon. My friend, who is a qualified yoga teacher from a very reputable school, told me that this was really bad advice and that you should avoid doing any pranayams when you have a cold. She said the only reason she went along to the class was that she had faith that the teacher was going to teach her something which really might help her condition.

She also mentioned that she got the impression the teacher knew very little about what she was actually teaching, especially as an exercise as rigorous as bhastrika needs people to be prepared for it, and the version taught in AoL shouldn't just be taught to everybody. I told her of a lot of the things on this blog and she said that she wasn't surprised at all.

2) We got to talking more about the bandas (locks) that are taught in the Advanced Course. I demonstrated to her exactly what we were taught to do, 20 rounds of bhastrika, followed by holding the breath in, then applying all 3 locks (sphincter, stomach and head), and she just started shaking her head. I asked her why, and she told me that you shouldn't hold your breath and apply the stomach lock at the same time, they are two completely contradictory things and in fact it's very difficult to do. I told her that I had thought this the very first time I had applied them, but then somehow I had forced myself to do it and found a way.

She told me that it was very dangerous and I could harm myself like that. She also mentioned that holding the breath in for more than a few seconds wasn't good for you either, and she made a special point of mentioning that her instructors had taught her that the bandas should only be applied under instruction of a qualified teacher and in an environment where sattvic food was prepared, e.g. on the retreats she had been on, and they recommended not to try them at home.

From both of these accounts I would conclude:

1) AoL teachers are not experienced enough to be teaching these techniques
2) The techniques taught by AoL can cause serious health issues to people

by The Doctor

tags: Deceit, Health Issues, Sudarshan Kriya

Traditional Pranayams

Traditional pranayams which in some cases are thousands of years old are taught by teachers who in many cases have spent years studying and practicing yoga, and who are aware of all risks associated with practicing these pranayams. They are taught to look out for various signs that a practitioner is having difficulties, and if they feel it necessary they will advise that practioner to cease practice completely, especially if they believe that a particular pranayam is not suited to them.

In particular, the teachers of traditional pranayams are taught about any contraindications associated with each pranayam, conditions which if present in the practitioner would indicate that they should avoid practicing that particular pranayam. They are also taught to tailor particular practices to each individual, ensuring that they understand the needs of the individual before recommending certain practices.

In Art of Living, however, teachers spend only 3 weeks in TTC which they can take in as little as a year after their Basic Course, and by all accounts hardly any of that time is spent in learning how to teach Sudarshan Kriya. They are certainly not taught about any of the dangerous side effects or contraindications, nor are they told to advise participants to discontinue practicing the technique if they encounter any issues with it. On the contrary teachers actually tell participants that Sudarshan Kriya should be practiced even when the participant is suffering from illnesses, especially colds. Teachers of traditional yoga pranayams, on the other hand, will warn practitioners to avoid practicing any pranayams when they have a cold as they generally tend to aggravate the cold.

Indeed when one Basic Course participant who complained to the teacher that they had a cold and were feeling nauseous and as such felt that practicing bhastrika would exacerbate their condition, the teacher insisted that on the contrary it would help them. That individual's condition dramatically worsened overnight and their cold ended up lasting several weeks. That bhastrika helps colds and flu is something which many teachers believe, and it is just plain wrong.

#11.45

AoL-Free said...

Meditation, yoga and spirituality are sacred if they come from a sacred and non-fraudulent source. Playing with such techniques can cause extremely damaging effects.

FEBRUARY 14, 2010 AT 10:33 AM

Jivani said...

When I first went to AoL yoga, I found out that SK caused severe headaches for someone. But there was no alternative practice offered for this person as far as I know. I wondered about the training of the teachers. It was a warning sign. I understand it is challenging to teach people with many different health concerns but what you describe sounds more like negligence: "past life, not enough grace, etc..." is deeply misguided. It is also highly unethical in yoga teaching.

I know BKS Iyengar only teaches pranayama to students with many years of experience in yoga. I thought that was a little extreme but it is far better than this. Perhaps the reason SK is thought to be unique to AoL(though many would argue it is not unique at all) is because good teachers would never teach it.

"Meditation, yoga and spirituality are sacred if they come from a sacred and non-fraudulent source." Very well said, KLIM. Precisely the reason I will not support AoL unless they bring out into the open and correct the lies they perpetuate in the name of spirituality. I will not support an organization that has all the attributes of a mind-numbing CULT. The good never outweighs the bad in such organizations.

FEBRUARY 14, 2010 AT 1:23 PM

#11.46

preenalg
India
1 Review

Art of living scam

★☆☆☆☆ Mar 21, 2022 12:14 PM 12948 Views (via Mobile)

Having attended an art of living course I can confirm that it is a pyramid scam. The breathing exercise they teach you can be harmful to your long term mental health. All of the "teachers" seem to be very depressed people. If you are looking to improve your life save your money and book yourself in to see a good therapist. All of these reviews on here seem to be fake 5 star reviews.

Like 2 Comments 0 Share Reply As Brand

#11.47

sri sri

March 7, 2020 at 10:05 pm

You are right most of the teachers are just mentally disturbed, no quality teachers,I had tried it years and all the teachers I met and did sudarshan kriya were pathetic.

Reply

#11.48

Sriharsha

February 14, 2016 at 6:24 pm

Actually, time and again, one should expose one's body to negative stimuli (hyper ventilation in this case) in a controlled manner with allowing ample time to recover. That is a good thing. Most importantly the teacher should be confident and advise the students to stop when it is time. For me, I experienced hyperventilation as well. But no one else in the class did. I later discovered that I stressed too much on breathing which led to the problem. It is about control. Bad teachers can ruin the experience.

Reply

Deepesh Deomurari

August 27, 2012 at 5:38 pm

Problem is not with Sudarshan Kriya .. it is with how are you taking it. You have to use normal gentle breath. I met many people who are trying to put 300% oxygen in one breath.. keep normal gentle breath and see everything will be different and magical. For all others – stop criticizing if you are having a problem that is due to the fact that you are not doing it properly – talk to your AOL teacher. If they can't able to solve it then talk to senior teacher. Remember lakhs or even crores of ppl are practicing it without difficulty.

Reply

---

sanjay kumar

September 23, 2012 at 12:28 am

Thanks for poting by Parthchoksi. I have also experienced lot of problems with sudarshan kriya. I have also tried with gentle breath as told by AOL teachers but of no use. After several practices my opinion is that this kriya has been designed wrongly. I also found many AOL teachers irritable and psychic in their approach to normal situations in life. During AOL course they look and talk very ideal things. I respect Ravishankarji for some of his good messages but my experience with Sudarshan kriya is very negative. anyway,he is doing good work by spreading message of love. but with so many complaints of sudarshan kriya he should stop propagating it further.

Reply

Would You Put Your Life in the Hands of People Like This?

JUNE 11, 2012

by The Doctor

tags: Abuse, Brainwashing, Court Case, Cult Culture, Deceit, Guru's Grace, Health Issues, Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, Sudarshan Kriya

> *Doctor: The following was left as a comment in response to* ***Sudarshan Kriya and Bipolar Disorder****. I have updated that post to reflect the information which "ex teacher" has provided in the comment below, however I feel that the comment provides so many invaluable insights into what is wrong with Art of Living teachers and the TTC that it ought to be published as a separate post.*

by ex teacher

Doctor, correction to your article: please note that it has always been the case that people with bipolarity should NOT take SK. It's been in the SK notes since the first day and it is still there.

However, as a former teacher, I can say that the problem has to do with control, and lack of critical thinking and professional training. Teachers rely too much on "guru's grace" and magical thinking, and TTCs are about "guru stories" rather than real training. Thus, at the time of interviewing students, details are overlooked, plus, with the ambition of recruiting more people, less or no time is given to reviewing the contents of the registration forms, and giving personal attention to those who need it.

Also, teachers are air-heads themselves with a hype that is almost suspicious and unsettling. Then there is no way one can tell if a student is writing the truth in the form or not. **And, nowhere in the form, or in an intro talk, or in the course, does a teacher tell the students there could be a problem if (there are many ifs) .... for example, people with high blood pressure, cardiac problems, epilesia, pregnancy, glaucoma, schizophrenia, also cannot take SK, to name a few**. Including (in the early days), people who consumed recreational drugs and/or alcohol (of course, this had to change since otherwise he'd lose numbers!). Not only that, people with certain thyroid problems cannot do bandas and bhastrika, and so on.

#11.51

r/Ex_ArtOfLiving • 1 mo. ago
ToddDiya2501

Art of Living refused to let Dr Brown adapt the Sudarshan Kriya (SKY) technique for ppl who had adverse reactions to it.

Dr Brown was a AOL teacher. He is an Associate Professor of Clinical Psychiatry at Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons

His research on Sudarshan Kriya is cited by AOL at https://www.aolresearch.org/published_research.html.

This is why he says he left Art of living

"We found the faster breathing techniques to cause adverse reactions in some vulnerable people, particularly those with bipolar disorder, anxiety disorders, posttraumatic stress disorders, and seizure disorders. Since we were not able to convince the Art of living Foundation to allow us to adapt the program to the needs of individuals with mental illness, we withdrew from the organization after about five years of study."

Pls read the full interview at https://www.newtownbee.com/08172015/newtown-yoga-festival-headliners-encourage-back-to-balance/

Even now, the Bangalore ashram FAQs state that Sudarshan Kriya is unsafe only for schizoprenia patients. There is no mention of bi-polar patients, anxiety disorders or PTSD.

5. **Should people with certain health issues avoid it?**

It is mandatory to share your health issues with your program trainer. So that they can recommend the modulations to the practice that are well-suited for you. People with schizophrenia avoid practicing it. A gentler and more powerful meditation practice called Sahaj Samadhi Dhyan is more effective in such cases.

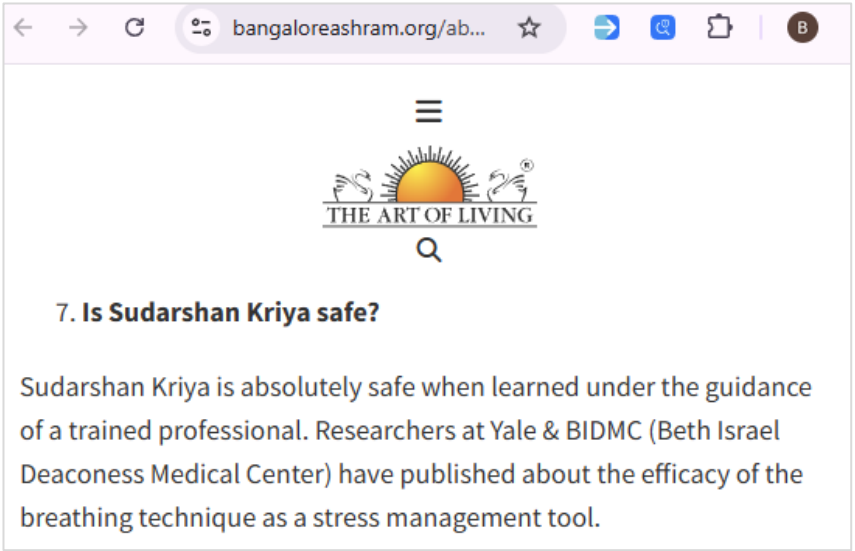
6. **Is Sudarshan Kriya a meditation?**

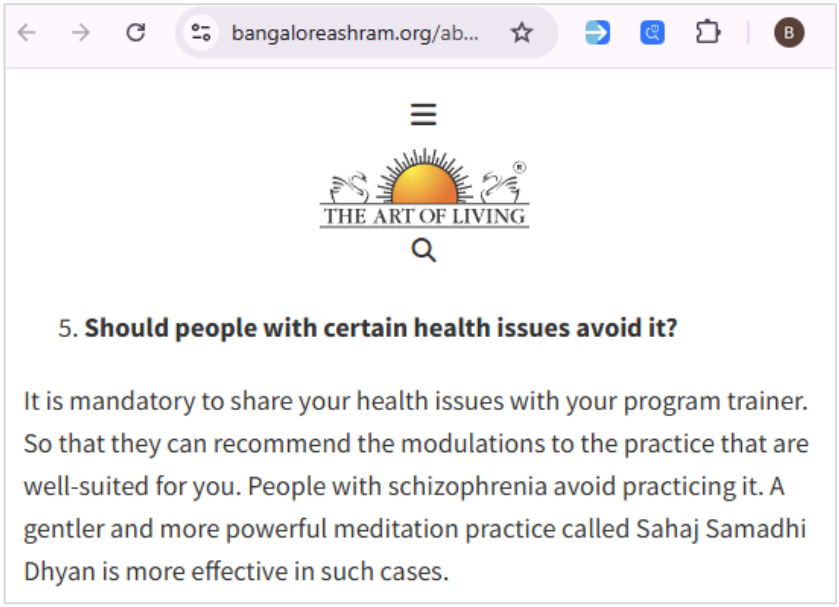
Sudarshan Kriya is not meditation. It is a rhythmic breathing technique that helps you reach a meditative state of mind.

7. **Is Sudarshan Kriya safe?**

Sudarshan Kriya is absolutely safe when learned under the guidance of a trained professional. Researchers at Yale & BIDMC (Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center) have published about the efficacy of the breathing technique as a stress management tool.

#11.52


bangaloreashram.org/ab...
THE ART OF LIVING
7. Is Sudarshan Kriya safe?
Sudarshan Kriya is absolutely safe when learned under the guidance of a trained professional. Researchers at Yale & BIDMC (Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center) have published about the efficacy of the breathing technique as a stress management tool.


bangaloreashram.org/ab...
THE ART OF LIVING
5. Should people with certain health issues avoid it?
It is mandatory to share your health issues with your program trainer. So that they can recommend the modulations to the practice that are well-suited for you. People with schizophrenia avoid practicing it. A gentler and more powerful meditation practice called Sahaj Samadhi Dhyan is more effective in such cases.

Princesspoi84 • 1mo ago

what gets me is how easy it is to give everyone a choice, by letting them know about the contraindications..... this I think is what is so confusing, what do they gain by withholding the truth? this is what I just don't understand....what do they get out of hiding this information?

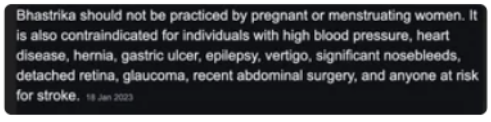
2 Reply Award Share ...

ToddDiya2501 OP • 1mo ago • Edited 1mo ago

So here, Sri Sri Ravi Shankar acknowledges that Sudarshan kriya does not work for bipolar disorder, but why is this not clearly stated on the Bangalore ashram website?'
https://aolfree.wordpress.com/2012/06/09/sudarshan-kriya-and-bipolar-disorder/

And the fact that AOL has recently started teaching bhastrika in intro talks... without any health checks... bhastrika may trigger manic episodes in patients with bipolar.

How can AOL simply teach bhastrika in intro talks without adequate health checks when bhastrika is contraindicated for so many ailments.


Bhastrika should not be practiced by pregnant or menstruating women. It is also contraindicated for individuals with high blood pressure, heart disease, hernia, gastric ulcer, epilepsy, vertigo, significant nosebleeds, detached retina, glaucoma, recent abdominal surgery, and anyone at risk for stroke. 18 Jan 2023

4 Reply Award Share ...

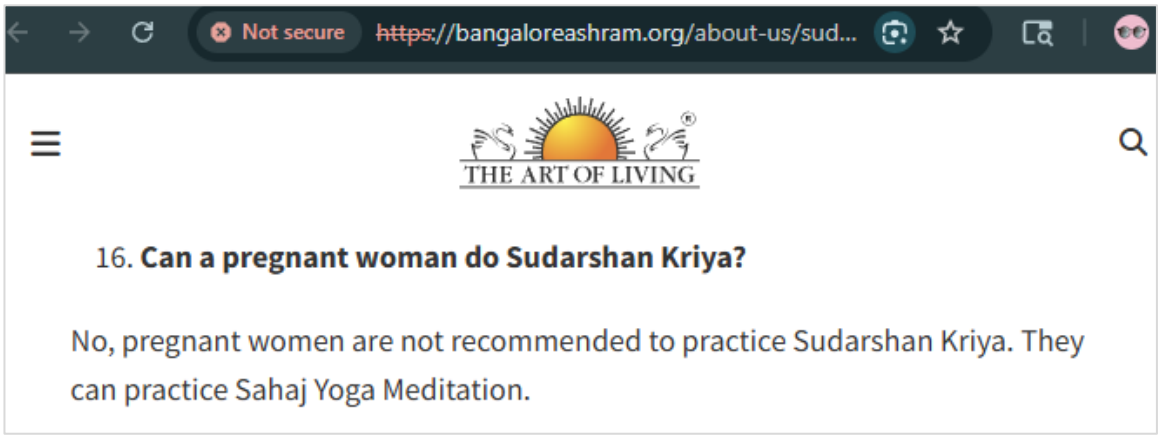
Princesspoi84 • 1mo ago

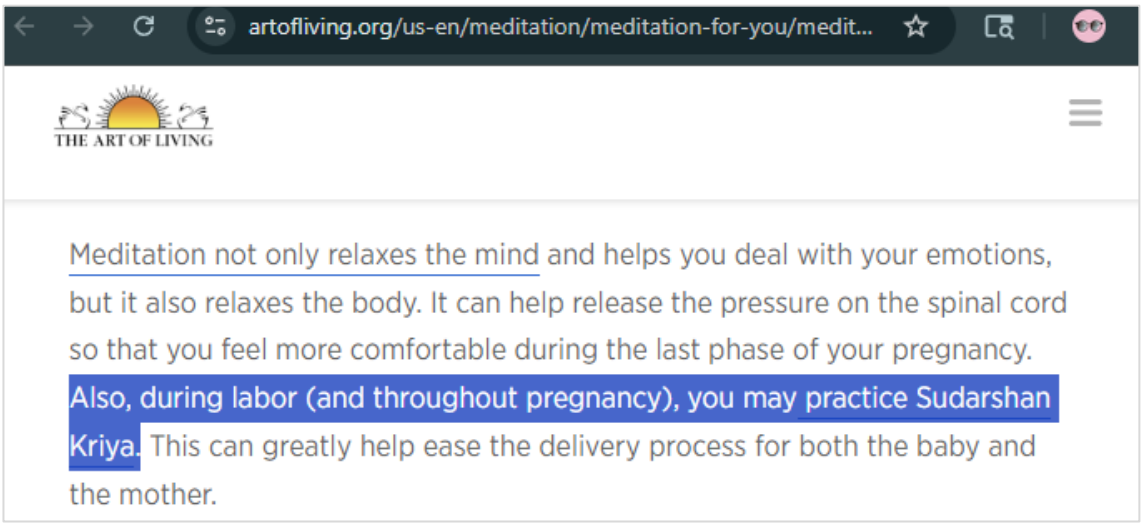
> whats irresponsible, is how they are still right now spreading disinformation about this "KRIYA" all over reddit, instagram, facebook... like pretty much everywhere. and anyone thats had a negative experience is removed, banned, shunned and isolated from the community, we are beyond the "grace of their guru"
>
> I think most people trust that when they go to a retreat that they are surrounded by professionals doing their jobs, not also being taken care of by active members of a "cult" trying to convince everyone that what they do is miracles.... its ashame really what they are doing, and really danergous. I mean I was there, its tough to weed through it in the beginning, and I am a yogi, especially if you have never done any thing with yoga, you wouldnt know what questions to even ask. They just blindly trust. And that to me is what is the most dangerous. I think of all the elderly that I met while being there, that may have high blood pressure or maybe different issues with heart disease and such and them keeping this information from them should be criminal it really should be. people have a right to know what they are getting themselves into.

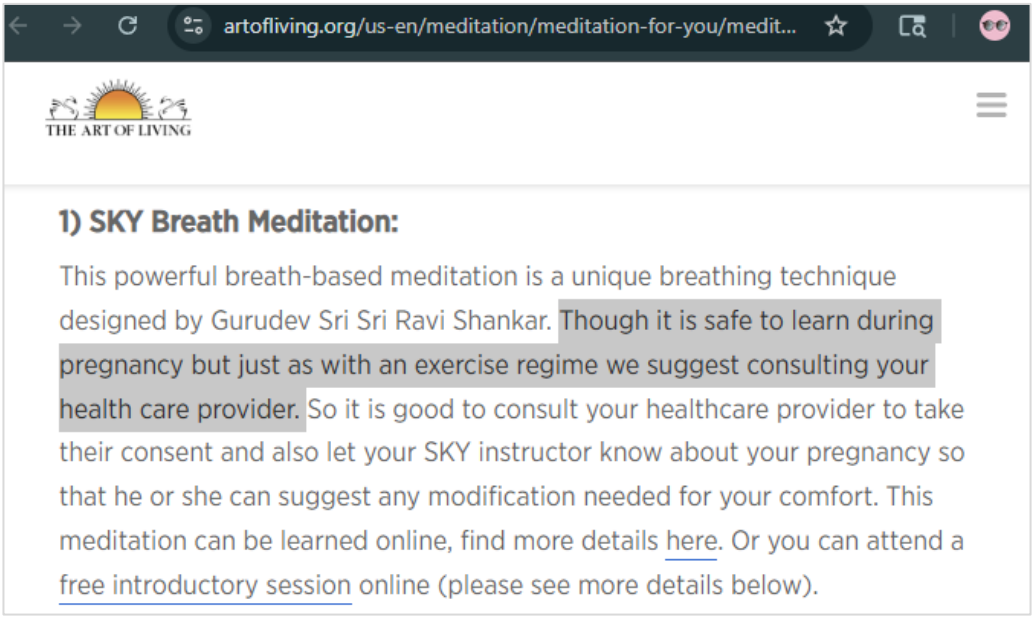
Swimming-Electron OP • 10mo ago

The problem lies in the fact that they claim no side effects, and if you report any, they dismiss it. Moreover, that money is not going in the pockets of those who work the hard work in the organisation. Plus, they are acting like a cult. "Don't question before you believe it." Where is all that money going? Why use coercion tactics if you want to do good? And if their spiritual practices work, why are ALL if not MOST of the teachers either arrogant, greedy, or worse, depressed? It's all a lie. The good is not done by aol. No, it is done by normal regular people. FOR FREE. or by paying money to aol. So yes, they are violent and hostile. Just quietly. And they want to make money and likely break world records. Now that part is fine by me- it's ok to want money and fame. It's very human. Don't do it at the cost of people's mental health though?

#11.53


Not secure
https://bangaloreashram.org/about-us/sud...
THE ART OF LIVING
16. Can a pregnant woman do Sudarshan Kriya?
No, pregnant women are not recommended to practice Sudarshan Kriya. They can practice Sahaj Yoga Meditation.


artofliving.org/us-en/meditation/meditation-for-you/medit...
THE ART OF LIVING
Meditation not only relaxes the mind and helps you deal with your emotions, but it also relaxes the body. It can help release the pressure on the spinal cord so that you feel more comfortable during the last phase of your pregnancy. Also, during labor (and throughout pregnancy), you may practice Sudarshan Kriya. This can greatly help ease the delivery process for both the baby and the mother.

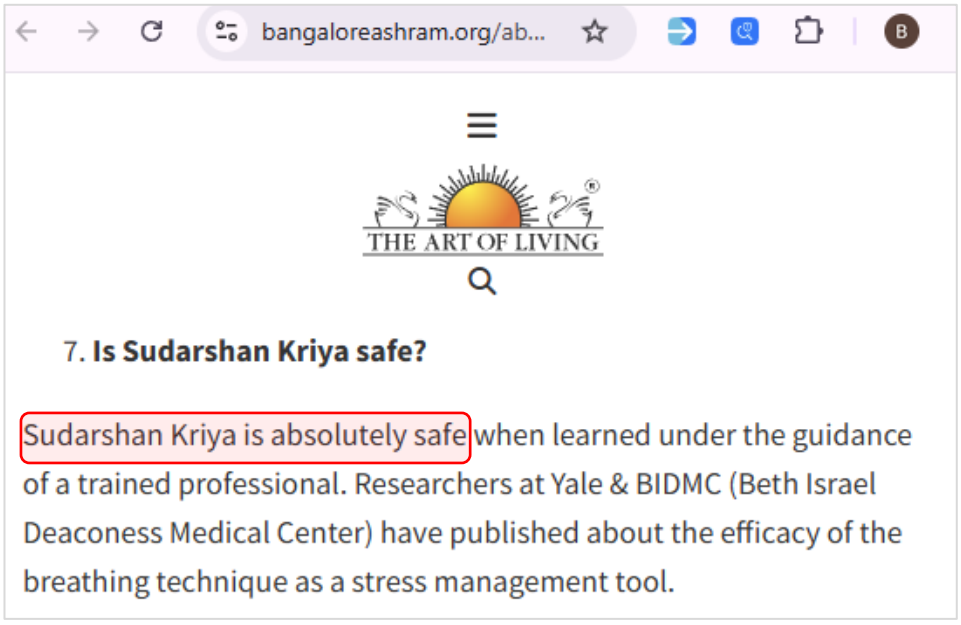

artofliving.org/us-en/meditation/meditation-for-you/medit...
THE ART OF LIVING
1) SKY Breath Meditation:
This powerful breath-based meditation is a unique breathing technique designed by Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar. Though it is safe to learn during pregnancy but just as with an exercise regime we suggest consulting your health care provider. So it is good to consult your healthcare provider to take their consent and also let your SKY instructor know about your pregnancy so that he or she can suggest any modification needed for your comfort. This meditation can be learned online, find more details here. Or you can attend a free introductory session online (please see more details below).

"Transparency and consistency are acts of compassion. When guidance aligns with evidence and communication is clear, safety and trust return to the same breath.
In that alignment, both science and spirit can coexist gracefully."

Questioning Advertisements Promoting Sudarshan Kriya as Safe & Free from Side Effects

"Advertising shapes faith as much as experience.
This chapter invites readers to examine how safety claims are framed
and repeated, and how good intentions may sometimes eclipse full disclosure.
Questioning is not rejection - it is participation in truth."

artofliving.org/sudarshan-kriya-depression
Sudarshan Kriya for Depression
Discover a "Breathing Meditation" Shown to Be
As Effective as Antidepressants
PLUS, FREE OF SIDE EFFECTS & FREE TO PRACTICE


bangaloreashram.org/ab...
THE ART OF LIVING
7. Is Sudarshan Kriya safe?
Sudarshan Kriya is absolutely safe when learned under the guidance of a trained professional. Researchers at Yale & BIDMC (Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center) have published about the efficacy of the breathing technique as a stress management tool.

Some Questions Truly Worth Asking

1. How is it that so many experiences of over 260 excerpts all shared by course participants and practitioners state that they still experienced these negative outcomes and adverse effects from practicing Sudarshan Kriya despite learning it from a trained instructor from **THE ART OF LIVING FOUNDATION**?

2. Could this suggest that the so-called training may be inadequate, and the instructors unqualified to handle the health risks involved?

3. Did instructors fail to adequately review or respond to participants' disclosed health conditions listed in their registration forms?

4. Alternatively, were necessary precautions for individuals with specific health risks not communicated clearly in a written instruction manual for home practice ?

5. On the other hand, did participants withhold critical information about their underlying health conditions during registration?

6. If so, does this indicate a need for a more robust and foolproof screening process for course participants?

7. What procedures, if any, are in place for instructors to verify the accuracy and completeness of participants' health disclosures?

8. Were participants properly screened to ensure they were medically fit to safely learn and practice Sudarshan Kriya and other advanced breathing techniques?

9. What did the screening process actually involve ?

10. Were health disclosures verified by a qualified medical professional ?

11. Were the health disclosures left open to the course instructors' interpretation and understanding without medical training or knowledge and the participants self-reporting their medical and health information without any medical oversight?

12. Were participants adequately informed-prior to signing a health waiver-about the potential health risks and necessary precautions associated with the Pranayama sequence and Sudarshan Kriya?

13. Were the possible adverse effects or risk of injury, whether due to participant error or instructor oversight, clearly explained?

14. Is it ethically sound for **THE ART OF LIVING FOUNDATION** to require participants to sign a liability waiver without fully disclosing the risks and health precautions related to advanced pranayama techniques such as Three-Stage Pranayama, Bhastrika, and Sudarshan Kriya Yoga?

15. Why does the FAQ section on the official website of **THE ART OF LIVING FOUNDATION** not include any information on potential health risks or precautions?

members.us.artofliving.org/policy/ppa-course

Waiver of Liability, Assumption of Risk, Indemnity Agreement, and Release

As a condition for, and in consideration of the right to participate in any way in any program provided by the Organization (as defined above), I, for myself, my personal representatives, assigns, heirs, and next of kin acknowledge and agree as follows:

1. The nature of Organization programs requires me to be qualified, in good health, and in proper physical condition to participate in such programs. If, at any time, I believe or am advised that the conditions of an Organization program may be unsafe for me, I will immediately discontinue further participation.
2. Organization programs involve risk of personal injury which may be caused by my own actions or inactions, the actions or inactions of others participating in the programs, the conditions in which the programs take place, or the acts or omissions of others, and that there may be other risks or social and economic losses either not known to me or not readily foreseeable at this time ("Risks");
3. I fully accept and assume all Risks and all responsibility for losses, costs, and damages I may incur as a result of my participation in Organization programs.

I hereby release, discharge, and covenant not to sue or hold responsible in any manner whatsoever, the Organization, its affiliates, administrators, directors, agents, officers, members, volunteers, and employees, other participants, officials, owners and lessees of premises on which the programs are conducted (the "Released Parties"), from all liability, claims, demands, losses, or damages on my account caused, or alleged to be caused, in whole or in part by the acts, omissions or negligence of any of the Released Parties and I further agree that if, despite this release and waiver of liability, assumption of risk, and indemnity agreement I, or anyone on my behalf, makes a claim against any of the Released Parties, I will indemnify, save, and hold harmless each of them from any litigation expenses, attorney fees, loss, liability, damage, or cost which may be incurred as the result of such claim.

Transparency deepens trust.
Honest messaging allows seekers to approach breath practices with
both reverence and realism, turning marketing into mindful communication

Chapter 05
Known Health Risks & Precautions for Sudarshan Kriya

"Every practice has its boundaries, every body its conditions.
Here we gather the known medical cautions and
practical safeguards so that enthusiasm can walk hand-in-hand with prudence"

It is particularly noteworthy that the health precautions and required disclosures for Sudarshan Kriya Yoga (SKY) vary significantly across different countries and regions. This inconsistency highlights a lack of standardized global protocols for health screening and risk assessment prior to course registration, potentially increasing the likelihood of adverse outcomes for participants with pre-existing medical or psychological conditions. According to peer-reviewed research officially published by **THE ART OF LIVING FOUNDATION**-based on studies conducted by former affiliated physicians Dr. Richard P. Brown and Dr. Patricia L. Gerbarg-certain individuals with specific health conditions should either avoid or significantly modify their practice of SKY. These include both physical and mental health contraindications that, in clinical terms, necessitate careful disclosure, evaluation, and, in some cases, exclusion from participation.

Physical Health Risks & Precautions For Sudarshan Kriya Yoga:

1. UNCONTROLLED HYPERTENSION
2. RECENT HEART ATTACK
3. SEIZURE DISORDERS
4. ACTIVE ASTHMA OR COPD
5. MIGRAINES OR SEVERE HEADACHES
6. PREGNANCY (NO RAPID BREATHING OR BREATH-HOLDS)
7. POST SURGERY OR WITH SERIOUS PHYSICAL INJURIES
8. HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE (* AS PER SOME VERSIONS OF REGISTRATION FORMS & HEALTH POLICIES FOR MEDICAL INFORMATION DISCLOSURE IN UK)
9. NEW MOTHER (* AS PER SOME VERSIONS OF REGISTRATION FORMS & HEALTH POLICIES FOR MEDICAL INFORMATION DISCLOSURE IN UK)
10. HEART DISEASE (* AS PER SOME VERSIONS OF REGISTRATION FORMS & HEALTH POLICIES FOR MEDICAL INFORMATION DISCLOSURE IN MALAYSIA)
11. DIABETES (* AS PER SOME VERSIONS OF REGISTRATION FORMS & HEALTH POLICIES FOR MEDICAL INFORMATION DISCLOSURE IN INDIA)
12. GLAUCOMA (* AS PER SOME VERSIONS OF REGISTRATION FORMS & HEALTH POLICIES FOR MEDICAL INFORMATION DISCLOSURE IN MALAYSIA)
13. ASTHMA (* AS PER SOME VERSIONS OF REGISTRATION FORMS & HEALTH POLICIES FOR MEDICAL INFORMATION DISCLOSURE IN INDIA)
14. BREATHING PROBLEMS (* AS PER SOME VERSIONS OF REGISTRATION FORMS & HEALTH POLICIES FOR MEDICAL INFORMATION DISCLOSURE IN INDIA)
15. TUBERCULOSIS (* AS PER SOME VERSIONS OF REGISTRATION FORMS & HEALTH POLICIES FOR MEDICAL INFORMATION DISCLOSURE IN INDIA)
16. BACK PAIN (* AS PER SOME VERSIONS OF REGISTRATION FORMS & HEALTH POLICIES FOR MEDICAL INFORMATION DISCLOSURE IN INDIA)
17. HIGH / LOW BP (* AS PER SOME VERSIONS OF REGISTRATION FORMS & HEALTH POLICIES FOR MEDICAL INFORMATION DISCLOSURE IN INDIA)

Mental Health Risks & Precautions For Sudarshan Kriya Yoga:

1. SCHIZOPHRENIA
2. BIPOLAR DISORDER (ESPECIALLY MANIC TYPE I)
3. PSYCHOSIS AND PSYCHOTIC DISORDERS
4. DISSOCIATIVE DISORDERS
5. PTSD WITH DISSOCIATION (ESPECIALLY CHILDHOOD TRAUMA)
6. SUICIDAL THOUGHTS (* AS PER SOME VERSIONS OF REGISTRATION FORMS & HEALTH POLICIES FOR MEDICAL INFORMATION DISCLOSURE IN UK)
7. PTSD, C-PTSD (* AS PER SOME VERSIONS OF REGISTRATION FORMS & HEALTH POLICIES FOR MEDICAL INFORMATION DISCLOSURE IN UK)
8. SEIZURE DISORDERS (* AS PER SOME VERSIONS OF REGISTRATION FORMS & HEALTH POLICIES FOR MEDICAL INFORMATION DISCLOSURE IN UK)
9. EPILEPSY (* AS PER SOME VERSIONS OF REGISTRATION FORMS & HEALTH POLICIES FOR MEDICAL INFORMATION DISCLOSURE IN MALAYSIA)
10. PSYCHIATRIC TREATMENT (* AS PER SOME VERSIONS OF REGISTRATION FORMS & HEALTH POLICIES FOR MEDICAL INFORMATION DISCLOSURE IN INDIA)
11. ADDICTION TO DRUGS (* AS PER SOME VERSIONS OF REGISTRATION FORMS & HEALTH POLICIES FOR MEDICAL INFORMATION DISCLOSURE IN POLAND)
12. ADDICTION TO ALCOHOL (* AS PER SOME VERSIONS OF REGISTRATION FORMS & HEALTH POLICIES FOR MEDICAL INFORMATION DISCLOSURE IN POLAND)

This fragmented approach to screening and health risk disclosure reveals that the responsibility for participant safety is inconsistently enforced, often depending on the location of the course rather than a universally applied medical protocol. Such variability may expose vulnerable individuals to practices they are not physiologically or psychologically suited for.

Dr. Richard P. Brown, MD, a professor of psychiatry at Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons, and Dr. Patricia L. Gerbarg, MD, an assistant clinical professor of psychiatry at New York Medical College, have been leading voices in advocating for evidence-based guidelines in breathwork. Both served as instructors with **THE ART OF LIVING FOUNDATION** for five years. However, as revealed in an interview, their attempts to educate the organization on the importance of adapting SKY practices based on individual health risk profiles were unsuccessful, ultimately prompting them to part ways with the Foundation. They have consistently emphasized that practices like SKY can be highly beneficial if they are tailored to the practitioner's physical and mental health status-an approach they found was not accepted within the organization's standardized model.

Their experience reinforces a core argument of this report: while Sudarshan Kriya Yoga may offer significant benefits to many, its safety and effectiveness depend on careful health screening, individualized adaptation, and acknowledgment of both physical and psychological contraindications. Without such measures, the practice risks exposing certain individuals to preventable harm.

Lack of Transparency on Health Disclosure Policy Changes

A further issue of concern relates to the shifting and inconsistent health disclosure requirements across different countries and time periods in **THE ART OF LIVING FOUNDATION'S** registration process for Sudarshan Kriya Yoga (SKY). Multiple versions of the medical information forms have surfaced, with

significantly varying lists of contraindicated conditions and precautions - from high blood pressure and asthma to more serious psychiatric disorders such as bipolar disorder and schizophrenia.

Despite these changes, **no public explanation or rationale has been provided** by the organization for the additions or removals of specific medical conditions. This lack of transparency raises a critical question: **Were these changes a result of internal reports or accumulated evidence of adverse experiences from participants with these conditions?** If so, the rationale behind these revisions becomes a matter of public interest and ethical responsibility.

It is scientifically plausible - and even likely - that certain updates were introduced **in response to adverse outcomes reported by practitioners with specific health conditions**. For example, there have been documented and anecdotal accounts of individuals with bipolar disorder, PTSD, epilepsy, asthma, and cardiovascular issues experiencing **worsening symptoms** after engaging in the intense breathwork sequences of Sudarshan Kriya. Yet, despite the appearance of these contraindications in some regional versions of health forms, **the organization has never issued a global advisory or unified guidance** explaining the medical logic or safety evidence that prompted these policy updates.

Such omissions are particularly problematic in light of the **enthusiastic, near-universal promotion of SKY as a highly beneficial or even "miraculous" technique**. While the reported benefits - such as improved mood, enhanced energy, and emotional balance - are often highlighted in promotional materials and course descriptions, **the potential for significant side effects, especially among vulnerable groups, is rarely communicated with equivalent prominence or detail**.

This imbalance violates a basic principle of informed consent: that individuals have the right to **clearly understand both the benefits and the risks** of any intervention that alters physiological and psychological function, especially one involving strong breath-control practices capable of inducing **hypocapnia, respiratory alkalosis, nervous system excitation, and altered states of consciousness**.

Without public disclosure of the rationale behind evolving contraindication lists, it becomes impossible to determine whether these are science-based refinements - a natural and responsible response to adverse event data - or inconsistently applied risk policies shaped by local decisions, legal concerns, or organizational discretion. Either way, **the public deserves clear and evidence-informed communication, not selective silence**, particularly when health outcomes are at stake.

List of Possible Adverse Effects from Practicing Sudarshan Kriya in Presence of Health Risks

If an individual with any of the officially listed health risks practices Sudarshan Kriya Yoga (SKY) without proper screening and precautions, they may encounter serious adverse physical and psychological effects due to the demanding nature of the advanced breathing techniques involved and the physiological responses they induce:

Cardiovascular Events:

- Sudarshan Kriya involves cyclic breathing including rapid breaths and breath holds that can significantly affect heart rate and blood pressure.
- In individuals with **uncontrolled hypertension, recent heart attack, heart disease, or high/low blood pressure**, these breathing patterns can cause **dangerous fluctuations in blood pressure and heart rhythm**, **elevating the likelihood of heart-related complications-such as irregular heart rhythms, heart attacks, or heart failure-or stroke.**
- Without medical guidance, the stress put on the cardiovascular system by SKY may exacerbate existing conditions, potentially leading to severe complications.

Triggering Seizures:

- The rapid breathing cycles in SKY can induce **hyperventilation**, which lowers CO_2 levels in the blood and can **reduce the seizure threshold**.
- For those with **seizure disorders or epilepsy**, especially if not screened or supervised, this can provoke seizures or worsen seizure control.
- Early sessions are particularly risky if the individual is not medically cleared, and no concrete evidence guarantees safety in these groups.

Exacerbation of Psychiatric Symptoms:

- Sudarshan Kriya's intense cyclic breathing may alter neurochemical balances and autonomic nervous system activity, which in vulnerable individuals can precipitate or worsen **mania, psychosis, dissociation, panic attacks, flashbacks**, or other psychiatric episodes.
- People with **schizophrenia, bipolar disorder (especially manic type I), psychosis, PTSD with dissociation, dissociative disorders, or active suicidal thoughts** are at considerable

risk of worsening symptoms or acute psychiatric crises without proper psychiatric clearance and adaptation of practice.

- Rapid cyclic breath work can trigger mania or hypomania in bipolar disorder and increase psychotic symptoms in schizophrenia, as documented in psychiatric literature.

Respiratory Distress and Complications:

- Individuals with **active asthma, COPD, tuberculosis, or other breathing problems** may experience **bronchospasm, airway irritation, or worsening of respiratory symptoms** if the breathing exercises are not modified suitably or practiced unsupervised.
- Breath holds and forceful breathing can trigger respiratory discomfort or exacerbate chronic lung conditions unless done carefully with prior medical advice.

Other Physical Problems and Risks:

- Post-surgical patients or those with serious physical injuries may not tolerate the physical demands of SKY and risk injury or delayed recovery without medical clearance.
- Pregnant women should avoid rapid breathing or breath-holding techniques since these can affect oxygen availability to the foetus and carry risks to both mother and baby.

Lack of Proper Environment and Guidance:

- Practicing SKY in a stressful, noisy, or inadequately supervised environment may intensify emotional or physical discomfort.
- Without gradual progressive training and monitoring, some practitioners may push beyond safe limits, causing adverse reactions.

aolf.blogspot.com

Referral and precautions

SKY and BWS courses are available in most major U.S. cities (*Box 1*) and are considered safe for most trauma survivors. Some precautions and contraindications apply, however.

Pregnancy. Pregnant women should not do breath-holds or any rapid or forceful yoga breathing. Slow, gentle basic Ujjayi without breath-holds is safe and soothing.

Comorbid medical illness. Patients with uncontrolled hypertension; migraine headaches; severe COPD; acute asthma symptoms; recent neck, shoulder, or chest injuries; or recent major surgery or myocardial infarction should not do Bhastrika or any strenuous yoga breathing. Yoga breathing is contraindicated in persons with seizure disorders.

Comorbid psychiatric illness. Yoga breathing—particularly Bhastrika and rapid cycle breathing—may trigger manic episodes in patients with bipolar disorder. Those with type II bipolar disorder whose mood swings are well-controlled may do yoga breathing under supervision if they avoid Bhastrika and rapid cycle breath forms.

Patients with chronic PTSD from childhood abuse can benefit from SKY if they do not have significant dissociative symptoms. The psychotherapist should contact the yoga teacher, prepare the patient, and help process early trauma-related material that may emerge.

Psychosis is a contraindication for yoga breathing. Some psychotic patients benefit from gentle basic Ujjayi under supervision.

Breaches In Ethics: Health Screening Failures and Privacy Violations Sky Teachers

Disturbingly, there have been credible reports of participants with serious psychiatric conditions such as bipolar disorder who disclosed their diagnoses during the registration process but were nonetheless allowed to learn Sudarshan Kriya. In several such cases, participants reported a worsening of symptoms, including the onset or exacerbation of manic episodes and increased suicidal ideation-both of which are widely recognized risks in individuals with bipolar disorder undergoing intense breathwork or altered physiological states associated with respiratory alkalosis and hypocapnia.Even more concerning is the fact that some individuals with known contraindications, including bipolar disorder, have reportedly gone on to become trained instructors or teachers within **THE ART OF LIVING FOUNDATION**. This raises substantial concerns about the adequacy and integrity of the Teacher Training Program (TTP), which appears to lack robust psychiatric screening processes to ensure that those entrusted with guiding others through potentially destabilizing practices are themselves medically and psychologically fit to do so.

One high-profile case illustrating these systemic issues involves a public post by **Swami Sadyojatah**, a senior faculty member of **THE ART OF LIVING FOUNDATION**. In a strongly worded and openly critical blog post targeting a former teacher of **THE ART OF LIVING FOUNDATION** who had published dissenting views, **Swami Sadyojatah** publicly disclosed both the identity and medical health information about the psychiatric diagnosis (bipolar disorder) of the individual. This incident is alarming not only because of the breach of personal data and the demeaning tone adopted against a former member, but also because it exposes a systemic failure: the individual in question was permitted to undergo teacher training and guide others in a technique from which they themselves may have been contraindicated.

Such disclosures appear to be in direct violation of internationally accepted standards of medical confidentiality and may also breach data privacy laws. This instance underscores the urgent need for **THE ART OF LIVING FOUNDATION** to review its internal processes regarding mental health screenings, data handling practices, and ethical responsibilities toward both participants and instructors.

These systemic shortcomings reveal not only inconsistencies in screening and safety protocols but also highlight a larger organizational culture that may deprioritize individual risk in favour of standardization and expansion-potentially at the cost of practitioner well-being.

Source: **http://www.artofliving.org/best-gift-wisdom**

> ***Q**: Can people diagnosed with bipolar condition do Sudarshan Kriya or the Silence Course?*
> ***Sri Sri Ravi Shankar:** I don't advice them to attend the Silence Course, but they can attend the Basic Course and do everything **except Sudarshan Kriya**. Simple meditation, pranayam and some yoga is very good for them. They should do Sri Sri Yoga.*

Knowledge of limits is not limitation; it is liberation from ignorance.
When practitioners know how to prepare and when to pause,
the breath remains a source of healing, not harm.

Chapter 06
Common Questions about Lack of Transparency on Health Risks & Precautions for Sudarshan Kriya Yoga

"Silence around safety often grows from discomfort. This chapter voices the questions that arise when information feels incomplete, encouraging open dialogue rather than blame. Asking hard questions is an act of care. When organizations answer them with humility, collective wisdom expands and faith matures"

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Q: Does the Art of Living acknowledge or respond to reports of adverse experiences shared on blogs and online forums? How has the organization supported individuals who reported such issues?
A: As of now, there appears to be no specific section on the official Art of Living website that addresses the concerns raised in various independent blogs or forums regarding adverse effects experienced during or after practicing Sudarshan Kriya or related techniques. It is unclear what formal mechanisms, if any, the organization has in place to follow up with such individuals, offer support, or investigate the validity of these reports. Given the scale and global reach of the program, this raises important questions about accountability and participant care.

Princesspoi84 • 2mo ago • Edited 1mo ago

*everything i post is obviously my opinions based on my own personal experience at the AOL. And these opinions are based on what i personally saw, witnessed, or experienced, and based off of my limited knowledge of being there for 3 months I have come up with my own perception and I've been trying to piece together what happens there based on others experience from leaving, and i truly believe that everyone has a right to know all these things about the AOL. There's no evidence except the what they have put out... they don't tell anyone how sky breath has contraindications, and that it can potentially harm you, you state here we have a choice, you're right we do. However, when and organization omits pertinent information, they are quite literally making it to where you don't have choice. Because how can I choose if I don't have all the information to keep me safe?

Not to mention, while I was there as a sevite i was very much pressured for months to do the kriya because I knew the breath had contraindications, I inquired about it during my stay as I'm a yoga teacher by trade, and I was told that because this is a kriya and not pranayama, that there are no contraindications, and that this kriya will 100% cure ALL ailments. And just for clarity, it wasn't just my teacher / seva coordinator that said these things, it was several members of the staff and many teachers constantly pressuring me to do this breath work, and the verbally told me specifically to just sit with it being uncomfortable, and that if I just keep doing the kriya it will eventually feel good in my body! EVEN THOUGH I TOLD THEM NUMEROUS TIMES IVE HAD SEVERAL TIAs and that this kriya could literally kill me!!! They didn't care.

Just do nadi shodina or moon breathing technique to help sooth your nervous system. Plain and simple. Sit with nadi shodina (the alternate nostril breath) is very safe the only contraindications are if you have any sinus issues or maybe deviated septum it may not work for you, so the modification would be to learn the technique without actually closing the nostrils and only 'close' the nostril in the mind i guess you could say, and think of the technique while breathing. prana follows chitta. So where the mind goes the prana will follow. If that breathwork doesn't resonate, the bumblebee breath may. Contraindications being that closing the eyes and ears may trigger someone with severe ptsd or anxiety so you don't have to do that if it makes you uncomfortable.

Hope this helps.

Chapter 07

Can the Founder of Sudarshan Kriya Yoga Address Adverse Reports Without Bias

"Reverence need not exclude responsibility.
This chapter reflects on how leadership can respond to critique while
preserving dignity and compassion. It is an invitation to courageous listening"

With sincere admiration and genuine respect for Sri Sri Ravi Shankar and the profound impact of his uplifting contributions to many individuals, the world and society, it is important to acknowledge a notable fact: Sri Sri Ravi Shankar has publicly stated that he does not personally engage in the regular practice of Sudarshan Kriya, the very technique he introduced to millions through **THE ART OF LIVING FOUNDATION**. In a recorded interview at the Foundation's International Center, he shared that he does not need to perform the breathing techniques himself- including Sudarshan Kriya- as he naturally remains in a meditative and aware state. Screenshots of these comments, captured from the interview's subtitles, are provided below.

This candid admission naturally raises sincere and important questions-especially for those who are encouraged to maintain daily and weekly practice of Sudarshan Kriya Yoga as a central support for their mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being. Although Sri Sri Ravi Shankar appears to continue other yogic disciplines such as asanas, pranayama, and meditation, even while describing himself as being in a natural state of meditative awareness that does not require any sadhana, his decision to exclude only Sudarshan Kriya from his personal routine invites thoughtful reflection and relevant inquiry.

"If Sudarshan Kriya Yoga is presented as highly beneficial and transformative, it's understandable that some may wonder why Sri Sri Ravi Shankar himself no longer practices it-especially since he has explained that his natural state of meditative awareness makes the technique unnecessary for him. At the same time, he continues to engage in other practices such as meditation and yoga asanas, which might seem, by the same reasoning, equally unnecessary. This naturally leads to a sincere question: why is Sudarshan Kriya the one practice he no longer follows on a daily or weekly basis, even though these routines are encouraged for his followers?"

Moreover, when individuals report experiencing adverse effects- whether psychological or physiological- from Sudarshan Kriya Yoga, it becomes challenging to assess how fully Sri Sri Ravi Shankar can truly and completely empathize with or address those concerns, given his own distance from its daily and weekly practice to understand its possible effects when done everyday over time with the extended versions during weekly follow ups. This is especially relevant considering that the technique is positioned as a potential remedy for serious issues such as stress, anxiety, depression, and even suicidal ideation while it is for a fact also mentioned that suicidal tendency is a contraindication in its health policies and medical disclaimers in the UK.

None of this is shared in a spirit of condemnation, rather, it comes from a sincere wish for clarity, transparency, and integrity in spiritual leadership. When a spiritual teacher steps back from a central practice they continue to endorse-particularly one presented as having significant therapeutic value-it is natural for thoughtful questions to arise. Spiritual leaders are entrusted with staying personally connected to the practices they recommend. When a legitimate personal reason makes this impractical, being transparent about that limitation-or about the circumstances that necessitate avoiding the practice-helps preserve trust and clarity. These reflections are not intended to diminish Sri Sri Ravi Shankar's spiritual stature or the positive experiences many have had with **THE ART OF LIVING.** Rather, they speak to the broader ethical and human questions that arise when there is a visible gap between personal example and public teaching- questions that deserve open, honest dialogue within any spiritual or healing tradition.

When teachers model accountability, they strengthen - not weaken - their legacy.
Humility before evidence, honors the very truth they seek to teach.

anonymous PERMALINK

July 29, 2011 1:52 pm

It appears from this post that Ravi Shankar has ceased his practice of Sudarshan Kriya? When did that happen? I have personally known him to do it, especailly after tiring travel. Does he have a heart condition now, or some other medical problem? I have not been around him in some time, so wouldn't know about these details of his personal life. But he did do it in the past.

I still think it is harmful to many people (including me), since I have witnessed and experienced many bad side effects from the practice, and discontinued it myself, in spite of his urging that I continue at that time. Having seen people in distress too many times while teaching, I realized it was not something that large groups of people should be doing. It could be that the pollution is too much? Or the world's atmosphere is too much? Or that most people are not suited to this practice? It is, after all a yogic practice, and not everyone is suited to yoga (as in hatha yoga, including asanas and pranayamas and kriyas).

Nagesh on March 29, 2011 at 6:51 am

AOL teachers and old timers know quite a lot about the bad effects of Sudarshan Kriya. Some of them have experienced it themselves and stopped practicing. Being an ex-AOL teacher, I personally know several AOL teachers who do not practice Sudarshan Kriya as it does not suit them at all. Even Ravishankar does not practice sudarshan kriya, not because he is enlightened and all that BS.He practices regular yoga asanas and pranayama. I have seen him do yoga asana practice in Rishikesh during one of the camps in 90s. He does not trust his technique on himself as he very well knows how he cooked it up.

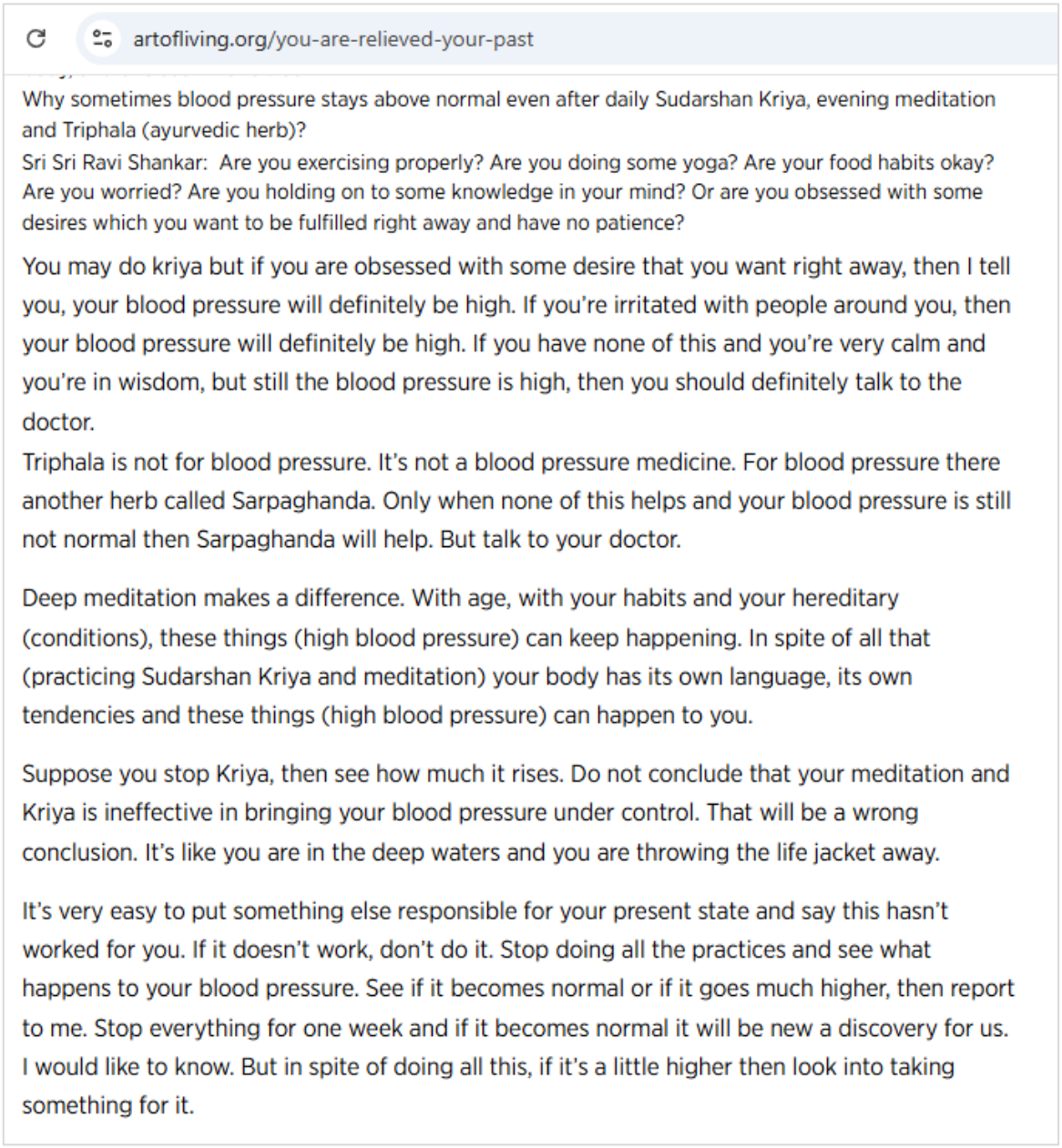
If any of you folks have studied AOL propoganda over the years, initially they used to pitch a lot on Sudarshan kriya. As years have progressed their conviction on the technique and more factual data on the ill effects were seen they have toned it down. Although they never tell this openely just catch any of the teachers in their unguarded moments they have lot of tales to tell on sudarshan kriya, and most of them not part of the official party line.

Chapter 08

Examining the Guidance Provided by Sri Sri Ravi Shankar to a Practitioner Experiencing Potential Adverse Effects of Sudarshan Kriya

"Here we look at communication after distress arises.
The way a school of yoga supports one's struggling practitioners reveals its maturity.
Compassionate follow-up is the highest form of instruction"

Sri Sri Ravi Shankar has undoubtedly made a profound contribution to the global resurgence of breath-based practices through Sudarshan Kriya Yoga (SKY). Millions have reported transformative benefits-mental clarity, emotional resilience, and a deep sense of peace. His vision has helped bridge ancient wisdom with contemporary life, offering accessible tools for well-being. That said, when a practice is adopted at such a large scale and with such deep trust, it becomes even more important to examine the nuances of safety, individual suitability, and the importance of informed guidance. Consider this question and Sri Sri Ravi Shankar's answer to it:


artofliving.org/you-are-relieved-your-past

Why sometimes blood pressure stays above normal even after daily Sudarshan Kriya, evening meditation and Triphala (ayurvedic herb)?
Sri Sri Ravi Shankar: Are you exercising properly? Are you doing some yoga? Are your food habits okay? Are you worried? Are you holding on to some knowledge in your mind? Or are you obsessed with some desires which you want to be fulfilled right away and have no patience?

You may do kriya but if you are obsessed with some desire that you want right away, then I tell you, your blood pressure will definitely be high. If you're irritated with people around you, then your blood pressure will definitely be high. If you have none of this and you're very calm and you're in wisdom, but still the blood pressure is high, then you should definitely talk to the doctor.
Triphala is not for blood pressure. It's not a blood pressure medicine. For blood pressure there another herb called Sarpaghanda. Only when none of this helps and your blood pressure is still not normal then Sarpaghanda will help. But talk to your doctor.

Deep meditation makes a difference. With age, with your habits and your hereditary (conditions), these things (high blood pressure) can keep happening. In spite of all that (practicing Sudarshan Kriya and meditation) your body has its own language, its own tendencies and these things (high blood pressure) can happen to you.

Suppose you stop Kriya, then see how much it rises. Do not conclude that your meditation and Kriya is ineffective in bringing your blood pressure under control. That will be a wrong conclusion. It's like you are in the deep waters and you are throwing the life jacket away.

It's very easy to put something else responsible for your present state and say this hasn't worked for you. If it doesn't work, don't do it. Stop doing all the practices and see what happens to your blood pressure. See if it becomes normal or if it goes much higher, then report to me. Stop everything for one week and if it becomes normal it will be new a discovery for us. I would like to know. But in spite of doing all this, if it's a little higher then look into taking something for it.

During a *satsang* event, a participant asked Sri Sri Ravi Shankar a sincere and important question: *"Why does my blood pressure remain high despite practicing Sudarshan Kriya daily and regularly?"* It was a genuine concern, voiced by someone who had clearly placed trust in the practice and was seeking clarity, if not guidance. However, the response offered no suggestion to adapt or adjust the practice. There was no mention of slowing down the breathing speed during the short or long kriya, modifying or skipping Bhastrika Pranayama, avoiding breath holding during Three Stage Pranayama or skip the energy locks or bandhas which too involve breath retention.

An essential question arises in this context: **To what extent does Sri Sri Ravi Shankar openly acknowledge and communicate the well-documented health precautions and contraindications associated with Sudarshan Kriya and its related practices, particularly for those with pre-existing health conditions such as hypertension?** This question came into sharp focus during a satsang session when a sincere practitioner asked: *"Why does my blood pressure remain high despite practicing Sudarshan Kriya daily and regularly?"* The question was neither argumentative nor dismissive- it came from a place of trust and concern, and represented a genuine desire for understanding. Yet, the response offered by Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, while perhaps spiritually reassuring, did not include any reference to medical or physiological considerations.

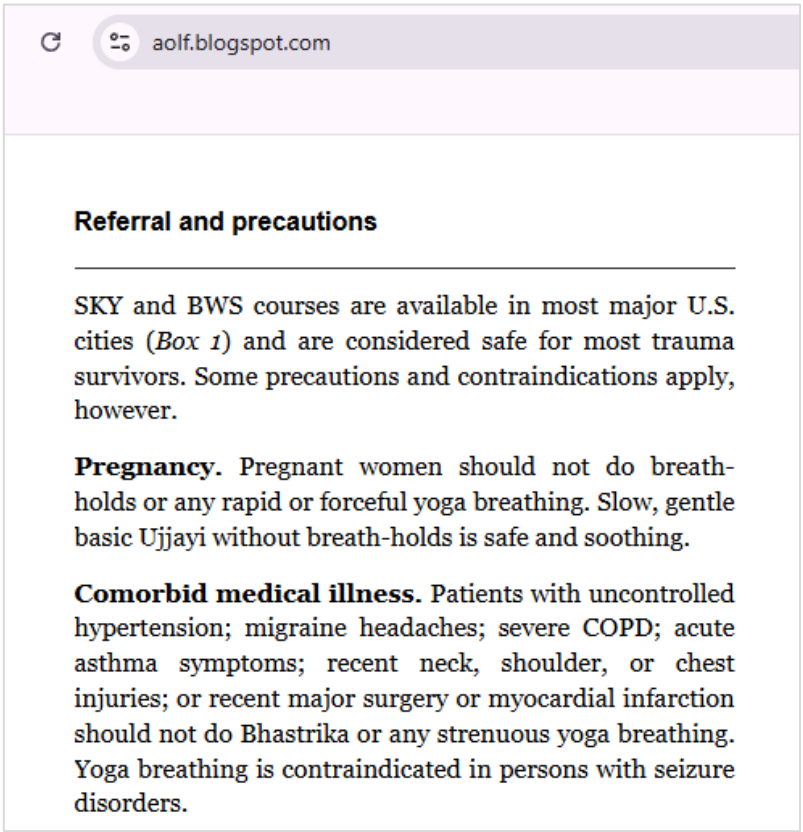
There was no mention of the possibility of adjusting the practice- such as slowing down the breathing cycles, reducing or skipping Bhastrika, avoiding breath retention, or moderating the intensity of the fast rhythmic breathing considering that the follower or practitioner had reported his hypertension was uncontrolled or the blood pressure continued to remain high despite regular practice. These omissions raise important concerns, especially considering that such modifications are widely recommended by experts when working with individuals who have high blood pressure or cardiovascular risks.

What the participant had reported could have been a clear symptom of an adverse effect resulting from the continued regular practice of Sudarshan Kriya Yoga. In fact, peer-reviewed research associated with **THE ART OF LIVING FOUNDATION** itself-including studies by Dr. Richard P. Brown and Dr. Patricia L. Gerbarg-clearly advises caution, or even avoidance, of intense breathwork practices such as Bhastrika and rapid SKY cycles for individuals with heart disease or uncontrolled hypertension. The individual in question, who explicitly mentioned experiencing persistently high blood pressure despite regular practice, would therefore fall within this risk category. Consequently, such precautions were directly relevant to his case during the satsang with Sri Sri Ravi Shankar-an aspect that was notably not addressed by Sri Sri.

This leads to several vital questions that deserve open and responsible dialogue:

- *Why was such a foundational safety consideration not addressed- especially in response to someone openly disclosing a condition that could potentially be worsened by the very techniques being practiced?*
- *Why was there no follow-up to ask whether the practitioner's hypertension began before or after starting Sudarshan Kriya?*
- *Why was there no inquiry into the specifics of their practice- such as whether they were engaging in Bhastrika, and if so, at what intensity?*
- *Why was there no mention of the need for individualized adaptations- something that is standard in even basic yoga therapy frameworks?*
- *And perhaps more deeply: Is there a possibility of inventor's bias at play- a natural but often unconscious reluctance to acknowledge that a practice one has introduced to the world may require modification, may not be universally safe, or may not be appropriate in every context?*

These are not accusations, nor are they intended to diminish the immense value that Sudarshan Kriya has brought to countless lives. Rather, they are posed in the spirit of ethical inquiry- recognizing that with great influence comes great responsibility. When a practice is presented as universally beneficial and taught to people with varying health backgrounds around the world, **transparency, individual assessment, and clear communication of contraindications become non-negotiable.**


aolf.blogspot.com
Referral and precautions
SKY and BWS courses are available in most major U.S. cities (*Box 1*) and are considered safe for most trauma survivors. Some precautions and contraindications apply, however.
Pregnancy. Pregnant women should not do breath-holds or any rapid or forceful yoga breathing. Slow, gentle basic Ujjayi without breath-holds is safe and soothing.
Comorbid medical illness. Patients with uncontrolled hypertension; migraine headaches; severe COPD; acute asthma symptoms; recent neck, shoulder, or chest injuries; or recent major surgery or myocardial infarction should not do Bhastrika or any strenuous yoga breathing. Yoga breathing is contraindicated in persons with seizure disorders.

The combination of breath retention, high-frequency breathing, and advanced techniques such as the Bandhas and Three-Stage Pranayama- as taught in more intensive SKY programs- can place significant stress on the cardiovascular and nervous systems. For most, these practices may be invigorating and safe. But for a subset of individuals- particularly those with high blood pressure, anxiety disorders, or cardiac sensitivities- these techniques may carry risks that must be acknowledged, not overlooked.

And perhaps most crucially: If such a basic and essential health precaution was not addressed at the highest level of the organization, can we reasonably expect the broader teaching community- comprising teachers trained under the Foundation- to identify and communicate these nuances? Or has the system, despite its best intentions, leaned toward standardization and enthusiastic repetition, rather than thoughtful adaptation grounded in medical insight? None of these questions detract from the spiritual intent or the life-changing potential of Sudarshan Kriya. But they do point to a broader, more pressing need: **a commitment to safety, individualized care, and evidence-informed instruction- modelled from the top down.**

In a world where people increasingly turn to spiritual and wellness practices in search of healing, the responsibility to communicate potential risks with clarity is not just a best practice- it is an ethical imperative. In closing, this reflection is shared with the highest respect for Sri Sri Ravi Shankar's contributions. The intent is not to question his wisdom, but to encourage a more comprehensive, compassionate, and medically aligned approach to teaching Sudarshan Kriya- especially when the physical and emotional well-being of thousands is at stake.

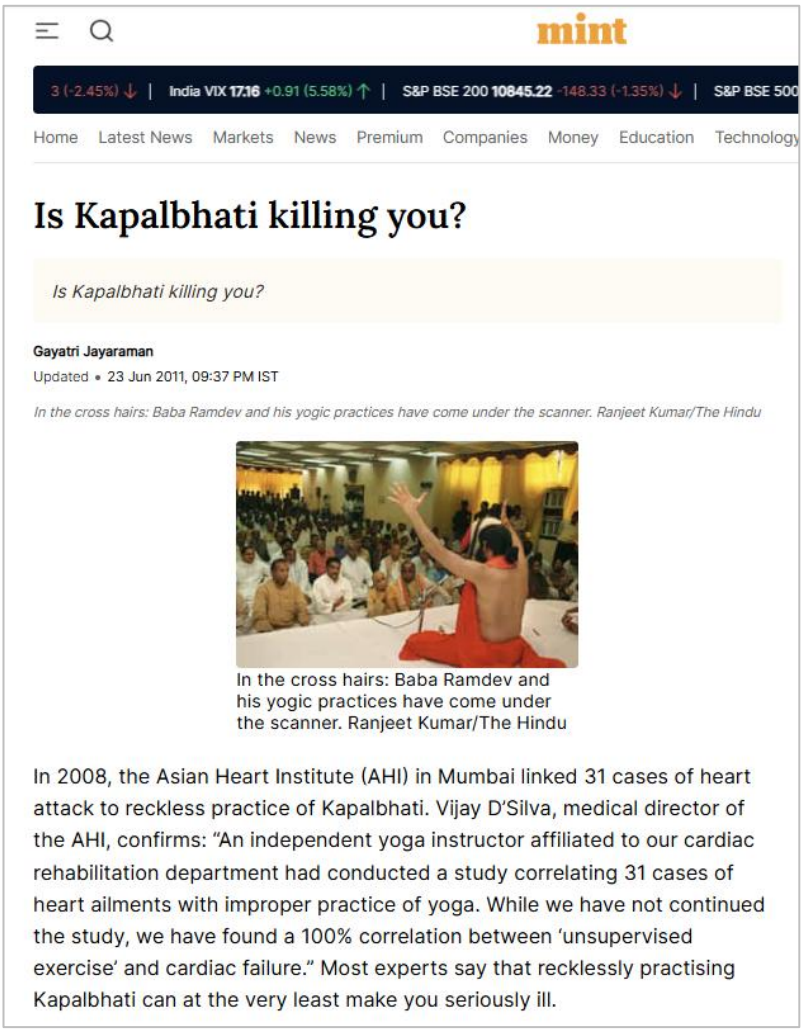
Care completes teaching.
Guidance offered with empathy transforms difficulty into dialogue and converts experience into collective wisdom.

Chapter 09
Advice on Forceful and Rapid Breathing Techniques by Prominent Yoga & Spiritual Gurus

"Across India's yogic landscape, masters have strongly cautioned
against fast and rapid breathing exercises.
This chapter listens to their counsel, drawing perspective from diversity rather than division"

Many respected teachers of yoga offer a clear and cautionary perspective on the use of yogic breathing techniques, emphasizing that these are not merely physical exercises but sophisticated tools meant to serve specific purposes within a complete yogic system. When misused or taken out of context, these practices can lead to more harm than benefit.

Kapalbhati, for instance, is often mistaken as a vigorous breathing technique to be repeatedly done in many rounds or counts like for 200 repetitions or more. In reality, Kapalbhati is not simply a breathing exercise but a *shatkarma*-a cleansing kriya intended to remove mucus and impurities from the nasal passages and the frontal region of the brain. It is primarily a tool for physiological and subtle energetic purification. Aggressive or excessive practice, however, can damage delicate tissues and disrupt the body's energy pathways. In fact, in 2008 the Asian Heart Institute (AHI) in Mumbai linked 31 cases of heart attack to reckless practice of Kapalbhati.



mint

3 (-2.45%) ↓ | India VIX 17.16 +0.91 (5.58%) ↑ | S&P BSE 200 10845.22 -148.33 (-1.35%) ↓ | S&P BSE 500

Home Latest News Markets News Premium Companies Money Education Technology

Is Kapalbhati killing you?

Is Kapalbhati killing you?

Gayatri Jayaraman
Updated • 23 Jun 2011, 09:37 PM IST

In the cross hairs: Baba Ramdev and his yogic practices have come under the scanner. Ranjeet Kumar/The Hindu

In the cross hairs: Baba Ramdev and his yogic practices have come under the scanner. Ranjeet Kumar/The Hindu

In 2008, the Asian Heart Institute (AHI) in Mumbai linked 31 cases of heart attack to reckless practice of Kapalbhati. Vijay D'Silva, medical director of the AHI, confirms: "An independent yoga instructor affiliated to our cardiac rehabilitation department had conducted a study correlating 31 cases of heart ailments with improper practice of yoga. While we have not continued the study, we have found a 100% correlation between 'unsupervised exercise' and cardiac failure." Most experts say that recklessly practising Kapalbhati can at the very least make you seriously ill.

Ramanavami, a senior teacher at the Sivananda Yoga Centre in Mumbai and a longtime student of the Bihar School of Yoga, shares her experience. Living with epilepsy, she was advised by her guru, Swami Satyananda, never to practice Kapalbhati. For this reason, she does not teach it to her students. “The benefits are not what matter most- the contraindications are. Kapalbhati can trigger heart issues, high blood pressure, vertigo, hernia, epilepsy, and other neurological concerns. If a student insists on learning, we only guide them to do it very gently, perhaps for 20–30 counts. These extended sessions of 200 to 1,000 counts are unsafe,” she explains. Similarly, Ashwini Gokhale, a senior Iyengar Yoga teacher with over 12 years of teaching and two decades of practice, recalls performing Kapalbhati only once- during a session with Geeta Iyengar in Pune on a cold December morning. “Everyone was coughing, so she asked us to use it briefly, to clear nasal passages. One of my teachers compared it to a strong antibiotic- you wouldn’t take it every day, only when prescribed. But today, Kapalbhati has become a quick-fix pill, like the weight-loss tablets people buy. It’s yoga for the lazy,” Gokhale remarks.

Several years ago, G. Khairnar, former deputy commissioner of the Bombay Municipal Corporation, had to be rushed to the hospital after overexerting himself while practising Kapalbhati. Industrialist Vijay Mallya, too, is said to have given it up when it worsened a pre-existing condition. Kapalbhati, one of the Shat Kriyas, has been recognized for its power long before Baba Ramdev popularized it. Its efficacy is mentioned in the works of Paramahamsa Yogananda, Swami Rama, Swami Vishnudevananda, B.K.S. Iyengar, Swami Nadabrahmananda, and Swami Vivekananda. In 2004, a nationwide panel of senior doctors, working with The Yoga Institute in Santacruz, Mumbai, studied its effects on a control group. Their findings were published in the *Journal of the Association of Physicians of India* in April of that year.

Panel member B.K. Sahai summarized the results: when practised under expert medical and yogic supervision, Kapalbhati showed benefits in managing diabetes, obesity, asthma, and blood pressure. It was also found to energize the mind and help combat depression. However, like every pranayama, it comes with contraindications. Shashank Joshi, consultant endocrinologist at Leelavati Hospital, warns: “I often see patients with complications from overdoing or practising Kapalbhati incorrectly. One patient with a weakened abdominal wall even developed a hernia. Yoga is a way of life, not a one-size-fits-all exercise, and its benefits need proper validation. “In the framework of Ashtanga Yoga, pranayama is the fourth stage, meant to be approached only after a steady foundation in asanas. “Traditionally, a guru would first assess whether a student was even ready to be initiated into yoga,” explains cardiologist Shekhar Ambardekar of The Yoga Institute. A teacher helps channel its effects safely.

“Asanas themselves bring about significant physical and glandular changes and must be built up gradually,” adds yoga teacher Gokhale. Experts caution that miracle-cure claims made in the name of Kapalbhati are misleading. At best, the practice may help reverse or slow down certain conditions, but not cure them

outright. Institutions like the Bihar School of Yoga offer specialized health-management programs that teach Kapalbhati in medically appropriate ways for specific conditions.

To demonstrate, Gokhale deliberately sits in poor posture, arching her back, and shows how many people practise Kapalbhati incorrectly- jerking their whole torso up and down with each breath. “This jolts your internal organs and forces air pressure downwards, straining the uterus. Imagine the damage if this is repeated daily,” she cautions. Shameem Akhtar, Mumbai-based Yog Acharya trained at the Sivananda Yoga Vedanta Centre, points out another common error: “Many confuse practices- Kapalbhati is a gentler form of hyperventilation than Bhastrika, but people often end up doing Bhastrika incorrectly. That can cause burnout and nervous system fatigue.” She warns further: “Certain pranayamas generate intense internal heat. Without proper guidance, this can intensify anger, irritability, or even illness.”

Yoga institutes and ashrams frequently see students seeking help for ailments brought on by faulty practice. “Teachers can often tell, from experience, when someone has been doing Kapalbhati improperly- even if they deny it,” says Gokhale. She emphasizes that pranayama should not be forced: “It’s not about doing; it’s about allowing. When the body and mind are aligned, and the right internal and external conditions are created, pranayama happens naturally. It is less about effort, more about letting go.”

Across generations, the world’s most respected yoga teachers have spoken with one voice on the subject of breath: it must be guided, not forced. Their collective wisdom reflects a deep understanding that pranayama is an inward art, cultivated through patience and sensitivity - not by power or haste.

B.K.S. Iyengar, one of the foremost architects of modern yoga, described authentic pranayama as *steady, smooth, and controlled*. Forcing the breath, he warned, is “a kind of greed” - an agitation that disturbs rather than refines awareness. In his method, the breath is to be *enticed*, not chased; approached with humility, it becomes a bridge between the physical and the subtle.

T. Krishnamacharya, revered as the father of modern yoga, taught that the breath should be long, soft, and measured. He reserved dynamic techniques such as *Bhastrika* for advanced practitioners, to be learned gradually and practiced with complete mindfulness. Exhalation, he emphasized, holds special importance - it should never be rushed or strained, for it carries away mental turbulence and creates space for calm.

Deepak Chopra also cautions against rapid or forceful breathing as a means to still the mind. His teachings favour slow, rhythmic patterns - particularly *Nadi Shodhana* (alternate-nostril breathing) - to harmonize the autonomic nervous system and restore balance between body and consciousness. While acknowledging the energizing effects of *Kapalbhati*, he insists that such techniques must remain conscious and controlled, not mechanical or excessive.

For **Sri Aurobindo**, the act of breathing was far more than a physical function; it was the drawing in of the universal life force, *Prana*, into every cell of the being. He warned that impatient or passionate breathing can awaken dormant energies prematurely, unsettling the mind and body. His approach centered on even, quiet, and measured breath as a foundation for concentration and inner transformation.

In the **Ashtanga Yoga** lineage, **Pattabhi Jois** often reminded students that pranayama is not a beginner's pursuit but a culmination of disciplined practice. Citing classical warnings, he taught that "the breath should be controlled gradually; otherwise, it destroys the practitioner." Breath, in this tradition, is meant to be deep, steady, and audible - anchoring the body's rhythm rather than overpowering it.

Contemporary teachers like **Donna Farhi** and **Vanda Scaravelli** echo this timeless insight. Both emphasize that breath should arise naturally, as an expression of awareness rather than effort. Farhi writes that any sense of strain in breathing signals imbalance; Scaravelli poetically described the breath as a wave of life to be *invited* - not commanded - into the body.

Even **Baba Ramdev**, who helped popularize *Kapalabhati* and *Bhastrika* globally, advises moderation and mindfulness. He repeatedly reminds practitioners to start slowly, to stop if strained or dizzy, and to avoid these practices altogether in cases of heart disease, hypertension, or lung weakness. In his teaching, forceful breathing must never replace conscious awareness or respect for the body's limits.

Finally, **Paramahansa Yogananda**, the great Kriya Yoga master, saw the breath as the sacred bridge uniting body, mind, and soul. He warned that hurried or forceful breathing scatters mental energy and disrupts inner stillness. In his method of Kriya, the breath is gradually refined until it becomes almost motionless, guiding prana inward and upward through the spine. When the breath slows into stillness, he said, the mind rests in divine peace - the true goal of yoga.

Sathya Sai Baba, known for integrating spiritual wisdom with practical living, viewed the breath as a divine gift - a rhythm that mirrors the pulse of the universe. He often said that the sacred sound "So–Ham" (meaning "I am That") is naturally repeated with every inhalation and exhalation, whether one is aware of it or not. For him, the purpose of pranayama was not physical vitality but remembrance of one's divine nature. He cautioned that fast or forceful breathing disturbs the mind's serenity and disrupts the body's natural harmony. Instead, he urged devotees to breathe gently and consciously, using each breath as a tool for inner peace and self-realization.

Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa, the 19th-century mystic of Dakshineswar, often spoke of breath as a sacred current linking the human and the divine. He discouraged mechanical or forceful control of the breath, urging seekers to instead let their breathing follow the rhythm of love and devotion. For Ramakrishna, the purest pranayama arose naturally in deep meditation or ecstatic prayer, when the mind

merged in God and the breath slowed of its own accord. “When the mind is still, the breath stops by itself,” he said, reminding disciples that spiritual progress depends not on breath manipulation but on surrender and purity of heart.

Ramana Maharshi, the sage of Arunachala, went even deeper into the stillness of breath. He taught that both thought and breath arise from the same source - the Self - and that by stilling one, the other subsides. While he acknowledged traditional pranayama as a useful aid for beginners to quiet the mind, he made clear that forced control of the breath could only offer temporary calm. True peace, he said, dawns when the attention turns inward toward the source of the “I”-thought, where both breath and mind become naturally still. “When the mind is controlled,” he observed, “the breath is also controlled. When the mind is still, the breath becomes perfectly quiet.”

A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, founder of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON), approached the subject of pranayama through the lens of Bhakti Yoga, or devotion. He acknowledged the value of regulated breathing but cautioned against overemphasizing technique at the expense of spiritual purpose. “Control of the mind,” he wrote, “comes automatically when one engages in the loving service of God.”

For Prabhupada, the sound vibration of the Hare Krishna mantra served as a higher form of pranayama - naturally calming, purifying, and uplifting the consciousness without strain or suppression.

Unity is not uniformity.
When differing voices are heard together, a fuller truth emerges -
one that keeps seekers safe while honoring every lineage's insight.

Chapter 10.
Sudarshan Kriya Yoga (SKY) vs Kapalbhati and Bhastrika

Kapalbhati, often called the "breath of fire," is a form of rapid breathing that involves forced exhalations and passive inhalations-essentially a hyperventilation technique. When practiced improperly or excessively, it can lead to serious physiological imbalances. As noted by Captain Ajit Vadakayil, Kapalbhati has the potential to cause *hypocapnia* (a drop in carbon dioxide levels), *respiratory alkalosis* (a disturbance in the body's acid-base balance), and *carpopedal spasms* (involuntary contractions in the hands and feet). These effects are particularly concerning for individuals with cardiovascular conditions, where such disturbances could pose significant health risks. Traditionally, it is considered a powerful spiritual practice, part of the advanced fourth stage of Ashtanga yoga. However, in contemporary media and wellness circles, it has been widely promoted as a quick fix for everything from weight loss to chronic illness-often with little attention to its contraindications.

This comparison is important when considering potential physiological risks. While Kapalbhati primarily consists of forceful exhalations with passive inhalations, Sudarshan Kriya includes at least one cycle involving both active inhalation and exhalation, making it an equally, if not more, intense practice. The long-form version of Sudarshan Kriya, often guided by an audio recording of Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, can last for over 30 minutes, with older versions reportedly extending up to 60 or even 90 minutes.

During these extended sessions, rapid breathing cycles are repeated for seven rounds or more for 60-80 or more counts each round or repetition, and in daily home practice or the short Sudarshan Kriya, this can be done three times with 40 counts each round or repetition. Practicing such intensive breathwork over extended periods sometimes for months or even years may contribute to chronic hyperventilation. This, in turn, can elevate the risk of conditions such as prolonged hypocapnia, respiratory alkalosis, and, most concerningly, cardiovascular events like heart attacks. The risk may be higher for individuals with genetic predispositions, undiagnosed health conditions that worsen with hyperventilation, or those who develop underlying health issues over time due to other factors.

Additional concern is raised by researchers Dr. Shirley Telles and Nikamal Singh of the Patanjali Yoga Foundation, who describe Sudarshan Kriya as a modified form of Kapalbhati. Alleson Reyna, a former assistant teacher at **THE ART OF LIVING** UK and science communicator, notes that their studies indicate techniques involving forceful breathing-such as Kapalbhati, Bhastrika (bellows breath), and Kumbhaka (breath retention)-can potentially trigger mental health challenges, including anxiety, dissociation, flashbacks, and psychosis, particularly in vulnerable individuals.

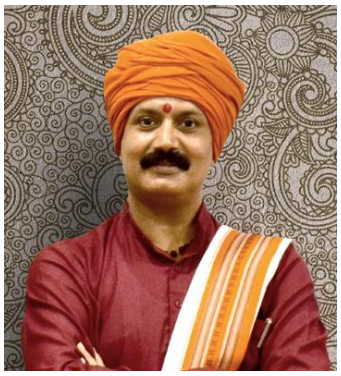
These concerns are not just theoretical. Another former senior teacher of **THE ART OF LIVING** has anonymously shared that they were aware of cases where individuals suffered heart attacks following the practice of Sudarshan Kriya. These revelations were detailed in the following blog post https://artoflivingfree.blogspot.com/2010/02/20-40-40.html, where the author and commenters describe several adverse incidents allegedly linked to the practice-including serious psychological and physical outcomes. According to the post, such incidents were often downplayed or actively suppressed within the organization. This lack of transparent dialogue about potential risks raises further questions about the safety and oversight of intense breathwork techniques like Sudarshan Kriya, especially for individuals with pre-existing health conditions.

Given these risks, constant vigilance, monitoring, and education on the contraindications of Sudarshan Kriya are crucial for any practitioner. However, **THE ART OF LIVING** does not seem to provide this information on its public website, social media platforms, or introductory talks. In contrast, Sri Sri Ravi Shankar frequently highlights how Sudarshan Kriya integrates multiple natural rhythms to help balance and reset the body's physiology, yet he does not always provide detailed guidance on who may or may not be suited to practice it. By comparison, Baba Ramdev is known to at least acknowledge the contraindications for techniques such as Kapalbhati and Bhastrika, though not always in depth, during his yoga sessions and interviews.

Bhastrika, or bellows breath, is another potent technique that is often misunderstood. It can stimulate the system and enhance pranic momentum, but it must be practiced only under proper guidance. Bhastrika generates heat and intensity, and without adequate physical, energetic, and psychological preparation, this can lead to significant imbalances. It is a preparatory kriya and should not be practiced in isolation or as a primary method of spiritual elevation. Bhastrika should *not* be practiced by pregnant or menstruating women. It is also contraindicated for individuals with high blood pressure, heart disease, hernia, gastric ulcer, epilepsy, vertigo, significant nosebleeds, detached retina, glaucoma, recent abdominal surgery, and anyone at risk for stroke. Those suffering from asthma or chronic bronchitis should practice Bhastrika only under the guidance of an experienced teacher.

While specific direct quotes warning *only* about Bhastrika's misuse are less frequent in public excerpts, Iyengar repeatedly emphasizes that strong pranayama practices (like Bhastrika and Kapalbhati) are advanced, are introduced only after *asana proficiency*, require graded progression, and must be taught with precision. E.g., in *Light on Pranayama*, Iyengar describes the dangers and difficulties to be avoided in pranayama.

Chapter 11.
A Message from Acharya Agyaatdarshan: An Authority in Yogic Sciences



Acharya Agyaatdarshan Anand Nath, popularly known as Master AD, is a contemporary spiritual teacher and an accomplished master in the Kaula-Krama tradition of Srividya Tantra. Acharya Agyaatdarshan's authority is not based on mass popularity or branding but on the authentic transmission of spiritual knowledge. He represents a living lineage that upholds the original spirit and method of ancient yogic sciences. His balanced approach, blending tradition with rational inquiry, positions him as a credible voice for serious practitioners. He is the co-founder of The Shakti Multiversity, alongside his consort Ma Shakti Devpriya Anand Nath, where they lead a dedicated initiative to revive and disseminate authentic spiritual practices. Set against the spiritual backdrop of the Himalayan foothills near Dehradun, their work focuses on restoring the original integrity of yogic disciplines, often distorted or watered down in modern wellness industries.

Acharya Agyaatdarshan is known for his bold and honest opinions about the misuse and misinterpretation of yogic practices in contemporary contexts. Unlike many who popularize techniques without a solid traditional or experiential grounding, Master AD emphasizes the importance of prerequisites, energetic readiness, and ethical frameworks before attempting advanced practices like Pranayama and Kriya Yoga.

Cautions on Pranayama and Sudarshan Kriya

One of the most discussed aspects of Master AD's teachings is his critical perspective on the widespread practice of Sudarshan Kriya, a popular rhythmic breathing technique. He warns that when such practices are undertaken without proper fundamental training, they can cause psychological and physiological harm rather than promote wellness.

Core Warnings and Observations

Acharya Agyaatdarshan raises several critical points regarding the unprepared or indiscriminate use of advanced breath-based techniques like Sudarshan Kriya:

- Inadequate Preparatory Practices: He emphasizes that engaging in powerful pranayama without first establishing a strong foundation-through ethical living (*Yama-Niyama*) and energy channel purification (*Nadi Shodhana*)-can be risky. These initial steps are essential to ensure the mind and energy system are stable and receptive.

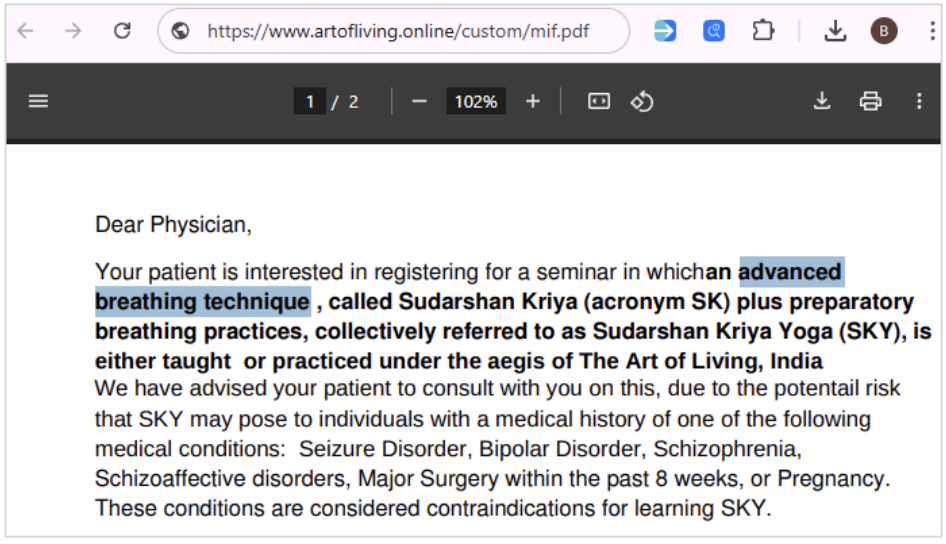
- Harmful Side Effects: Drawing from documented cases and firsthand reports, he notes that some individuals have suffered adverse outcomes from practicing Sudarshan Kriya, such as:
    - Cognitive issues like memory loss and poor focus, Emotional disturbances including depression and emotional dullness, Physical symptoms like hand tremors and fatigue and Overall reduction in intellectual sharpness and mental vitality

He attributes these effects to the aggressive and sometimes unregulated nature of breath manipulation, which can disturb the body's subtle energy balance if practiced without proper oversight.

- Overzealous Practice Without Individual Assessment: Acharya cautions against the "one-size-fits-all" approach to breathwork. He believes that advanced pranayama should be personalized, taking into account the practitioner's constitution, mental state, and spiritual readiness.
- Superficial Instruction and Misguided Popularization: He warns that when such powerful practices are taught en masse without depth, they risk becoming spiritual shortcuts rather than transformative tools. His often-quoted remark-"Pranayama is killing people"-serves as a wake-up call to treat these sacred techniques with the seriousness they deserve.
- Strong Statement on Pranayama Abuse: Acharya has gone so far as to assert that "Pranayama is killing people"-not because the practice is inherently harmful, but because it is often taught superficially, without understanding its depth, prerequisites, and individualized application.

In light of Acharya Agyaatdarshan's message, which underscores the importance of starting breathwork with fundamental and basic exercises before gradually advancing to more complex techniques, the process can be likened to shifting gears in a car-beginning at lower speeds and gears, then safely progressing to higher ones.

However, this is not the case with **THE ART OF LIVING FOUNDATION'S** Happiness Program. In this program, Sudarshan Kriya Yoga-a technique that **THE ART OF LIVING FOUNDATION** clearly says is an advanced breathing exercise-is taught to everyone, without first guiding them through the basic steps or beginner-level practices and requiring them to continue for at least 3 to 6 months before moving on to more advanced, intense breathwork. This kind of careful progression is the norm followed by authentic yoga schools such as the Iyengar School of Yoga and others.


https://www.artofliving.online/custom/mif.pdf
1 / 2
102%
Dear Physician,
Your patient is interested in registering for a seminar in whichan advanced breathing technique , called Sudarshan Kriya (acronym SK) plus preparatory breathing practices, collectively referred to as Sudarshan Kriya Yoga (SKY), is either taught or practiced under the aegis of The Art of Living, India
We have advised your patient to consult with you on this, due to the potentail risk that SKY may pose to individuals with a medical history of one of the following medical conditions: Seizure Disorder, Bipolar Disorder, Schizophrenia, Schizoaffective disorders, Major Surgery within the past 8 weeks, or Pregnancy. These conditions are considered contraindications for learning SKY.

Ach. Agyaatdarshan *says:*

September 13, 2012 at 11:20 am

Beloved Ones,

There are umpteen number of cases reporting health-issues starting right from tinnitus to severe headaches, cramps in body to absentmindedness, internal piles to diarrhea by not following the proper preparatory steps before engaging in high-speed breathing exercises (call it pranayama). It is surprising how we can induct people in such a rigorous breathing regime without having one assessed for his health conditions and any prevailing ailments.

You are yet again doing the same mistake by asking me on here virtual space to guide you in certain kind of Yoga for restoration of your health. It would be better if you could send in your details like place you currently are, your age and other related things.. that will possibly help me more in finding out a suitable remedy and also possibility of having someone visit you.

Love & Light
– Ach. Agyaatdarshan Anand Nath

Reply

Chapter 12.
A Message From the Child Prodigy & Astrologer who Predicted the Covid Pandemic

In a digital age where ancient practices meet modern scrutiny, few would expect a quiet storm to brew around something as seemingly benign as breathing. Yet, that is precisely what unfolded when Abhigya Anand, a young prodigal Vedic astrologer and spiritual commentator, released a bold and controversial statement on his YouTube channel on the Sudarshan Kriya.

Abhigya, known for his early mastery of sacred texts and outspoken views on spiritual practices, didn't mince words. With a calm but critical tone, he raised an alarm: could a technique hailed for its healing powers actually carry hidden dangers? *“People must understand that reckless manipulation of breath/prana can come at a cost,” he said in his video, which quickly circulated across spiritual circles online.*

Sudarshan Kriya is often marketed as a transformative breathwork technique- capable of reducing stress, improving clarity, and even addressing emotional blockages. However, Abhigya pointed to a pattern of adverse reactions, particularly among those with pre-existing health conditions. According to his analysis, the technique's rapid and repetitive breathing cycles could potentially disrupt the body's natural rhythms, leading to complications. The warning wasn't issued lightly. Citing user testimonials and anecdotal evidence found on independent blogs such as those by Acharya Agyatdarshan and Parth Choksi, Abhigya highlighted cases of individuals who experienced physical and psychological distress after practicing the kriya. Reported symptoms included insomnia, heightened anxiety, chest tightness, high blood pressure, and in some cases, panic-like sensations during or after sessions. Although breathwork has long been celebrated in both traditional and modern wellness paradigms, the medical community has shown cautious interest in such practices. Several healthcare professionals have echoed similar concerns about intense or unregulated breathing exercises- particularly those involving hyperventilation or prolonged retentions. While some find therapeutic value in structured breathwork, many agree that such techniques should be approached with individualized medical supervision, especially for those with cardiovascular or psychiatric vulnerabilities. **THE ART OF LIVING FOUNDATION**, for its part, maintains that Sudarshan Kriya is completely safe when taught correctly by certified instructors. On their website and in official literature, they emphasize that the technique has been practiced by millions globally, often with positive outcomes. However, despite the growing buzz around Abhigya’s critique, the organization has yet to issue a direct response. As of this writing, no senior teacher, medical advisor, or spokesperson from the foundation has publicly addressed his claims or countered his assertions through a dialogue or debate.

There has been no formal rebuttal video, no clarifying podcast, and no engagement in an open forum- leaving a noticeable vacuum in public discourse.

This lack of engagement has fuelled further curiosity. Is it a case of dignified silence in the face of baseless critique- or is there more to be addressed? In the absence of open conversation between the two parties, the spiritual community finds itself divided. Some practitioners, especially those with positive experiences, dismiss Abhigya's concerns as overly cautious or misinformed. Others welcome his challenge, seeing it as an opportunity to explore the science behind breath-based practices more transparently. What remains clear is the need for deeper inquiry. Practices like Sudarshan Kriya may indeed offer profound benefits- but that should not exclude them from critical examination. After all, even the most sacred traditions must withstand the light of evidence and the test of safety.

Interestingly, it is said that Ravi Shankar recited verses of the Bhagavad Gita at the tender age of four. In a striking parallel, Abhigya had memorized the entire scripture by the time he was seven. So, Abhigya's words definitely merit attention especially if ability to read or chant the Bhagavad Gita at a young age is considered sagacious or mystical.

Chapter 13.
Merchant Navy Veteran Trained in Respiratory Protocols Questions Safety of Sudarshan Kriya: Warns of Potential Health Risks

Ajit Vadakayil, a retired Indian Merchant Navy captain and expert in maritime physiology, has raised red flags about Sudarshan Kriya-a core breathing practice taught in the Happiness Program of **THE ART OF LIVING** *(AOL) foundation.*

Citing his professional background in oxygen management and respiratory safety protocols, Vadakayil cautions that fast, forceful, or rapid breathing techniques may lead to hyperventilation and pose serious long-term health risks. He questions the widespread promotion of such practices, including Sudarshan Kriya, warning they may do more harm than good to some people in the long term.

The Sudarshan Kriya or Sudarshan Kriya Yoga (SKY) breathwork taught by **THE ART OF LIVING FOUNDATION** has been defined by its officially published research papers as a form of rhythmic hyperventilation and is a unique yogic breathing practice, that involves several types of cyclical breathing patterns, ranging from slow and calming to rapid and stimulating. The SKY breathwork is also described in some research papers as form of a cyclical breathing protocol guided by an audio recording consisting of slow, medium, and fast breath cycle rates. The Sudarshan Kriya is preceded by a sequence of breathing exercises or Pranayamas that involve Ujjayi or "Victorious Breath" breathing which includes holding and suspension of breaths followed by Bhastrika Pranayama or "Bellows Breath" in which airis rapidly inhaled and forcefully exhaled at a faster than normal breathing rate of 30 breaths per minute.

According to Vadakayil, breathing exercises involving fast breathing can lead some people to experience physiological conditions like **hypocapnia** (reduced carbon dioxide levels in the blood), hypoxia (reduced oxygen levels in the blood) **respiratory alkalosis**, and carpopedal spasms-involuntary muscle contractions of the hands and feet.These symptoms, he states, are known side effects of hyperventilation and are not uncommon in environments involving altered breathing patterns, such as high-pressure diving or emergency respiratory scenarios.

VADAKAYIL'S WIFE EXPERIENCED TINGLING AND SPASMS AFTER SUDARSHAN KRIYA

Vadakayil's central claim is rooted in his wife's experience during an **ART OF LIVING** course she attended at his request several years ago. According to Vadakayil, the intention behind her participation was to personally observe and document the physiological effects of Sudarshan Kriya, particularly its fast-paced breathing components. He states that he sent her with explicit instructions: follow the course

exactly as taught, no more, no less. Prior to the session, he warned her about what he believes are harmful physical symptoms associated with hyperventilation, such as tingling limbs and involuntary spasms-sensations that are often described within AOL teachings as signs of "prana" (life force) movement or detoxification. In addition to health concerns, Vadakayil argues that intense breath-based techniques can impair critical thinking, leaving practitioners more susceptible to ideological influence-a view consistent with his broader critique of organized spiritual movements and cults.

PHYSICAL REACTIONS AND SYMPTOMS

According to Vadakayil, during the fast or rapid breathing cycles in the Sudarshan Kriya, his wife experienced severe tingling in her arms and feet. She reportedly tucked her limbs close to her body to prevent what she feared would be full-body spasms. He attributes these symptoms to a condition known as **carpopedal spasms**-involuntary muscle contractions that can result from hyperventilation-induced hypocapnia, a drop in blood carbon dioxide (CO_2) levels. Vadakayil uses his wife's experience as a cautionary tale, arguing that such physical symptoms are not spiritual progress but evidence of physiological harm due to hyperventilation, and warning others to be wary of similar practices. He contends that these physiological reactions are signs of **alkalosis**-a condition that can constrict cerebral blood flow, impair cognition, and potentially cause lasting harm if unchecked. He strongly disputes the course instructors' explanation that these sensations were beneficial signs of purification, calling such claims "a terrific lie."

Vadakayil also claims that many individuals have reported adverse health effects from practicing Sudarshan Kriya, such as heightened anxiety, memory disturbances, and neurological symptoms. He asserts that many experienced improvement after discontinuing the practice.

Numerous accounts shared in the comment sections of blogs by Parth Choksi, Acharya Agyatdarshan, and former ART OF LIVING instructors-such as Leaving The Art of Living, Beyond The Art of Living, and Further Beyond The Art of Living-appear to support his claims, reflecting similar concerns and adverse experiences. However, these claims remain largely anecdotal and are not substantiated by peer-reviewed research, as most studies on Sudarshan Kriya focus on short- to medium-term outcomes. There is limited scientific data on its long-term effects-particularly in individuals who unknowingly had, or later developed, health conditions that may be contraindicated for fast or intense breathing practices, potentially leading to adverse experiences. Following the experience, his wife reportedly questioned the instructor and opted not to continue with the program.

SCIENTIFIC BASIS AND HEALTH WARNINGS

Based on his expertise in maritime physiology and safety-particularly in protocols related to diving and oxygen regulation, Captain Ajit Vadakayil highlights the dangers of rapid breathing techniques that involve hyperventilation. He explains that such practices can significantly disturb the body's acid-base balance by depleting carbon dioxide (CO_2) levels, referencing standards from maritime safety to support his point.

Vadakayil outlines how fast, rapid or forceful breathing exercises-particularly when done incorrectly, too intensely, or for prolonged periods-can have harmful physiological effects. These risks are especially concerning for individuals with existing medical conditions or those who may be predisposed to developing health issues over time due to genetic factors, lifestyle choices, or other vulnerabilities. Such conditions may be contraindicated for practices like Bhastrika, Kapalbhati, or Sudarshan Kriya (also known as Sudarshan Kriya Yoga or SKY), which involve variable or rapid breathing patterns.

The risks increase when instructors are unaware of how certain health conditions may interact negatively with these techniques, especially if those conditions evolve or worsen over time. The situation is further aggravated when there is no regular monitoring, health screening is inadequate or superficial, or when course instructors dismiss medical concerns due to lack of awareness, education, overconfidence or magical thinking.

To understand the potential health risks and the underlying factors that can cause it, it is important to learn about a list of conditions and important considerations that every potential practitioner and infact even a yoga and pranayama instructor teaching fast, rapid or forceful breathing including breath retention and suspension exercises should know and understand well.

Chapter 14.
Scientific Basis: What You Should Know About Hypocapnia (Low Carbon Dioxide Levels)

Hypocapnia, or low carbon dioxide levels in the blood, can result from practicing rapid or deep breathing exercises for prolonged periods over a. This drop in CO_2 can cause a reduction in blood flow to the brain, potentially triggering neurological issues such as memory problems and concentration difficulties. Hypocapnia can also increase the risk of heart attacks, strokes, arrhythmias, and worsen existing heart conditions in susceptible individuals or people with underlying conditions or predisposition. Additionally, it can cause dizziness, fainting, palpitations, and blood pressure spikes.

How Hypocapnia Can Be Harmful To Health

Cardiovascular Conditions: The reduction in CO_2 causes blood vessels to constrict, which can trigger arrhythmias (irregular heartbeats), an increased heart rate (tachycardia), and spikes in blood pressure. These effects can worsen existing heart conditions and, in individuals with known or undiagnosed coronary artery disease, may potentially lead to a heart attack.

Neurological Conditions: Low CO_2 levels (hypocapnia) can cause cerebral vasoconstriction, reducing blood flow to the brain. This may result in confusion, difficulty concentrating, and memory problems or trouble remembering. Such cognitive effects can worsen neurological conditions such as epilepsy, migraines, or a history of strokes. In more severe cases, this reduction in cerebral perfusion can increase the risk of Transient Ischemic Attacks (TIAs) or ischemic strokes.

Long-term engagement in hyperventilation-based breathwork practices-which often induce hypocapnia, hypoxia, and respiratory alkalosis-may carry additional risks. Chronic or repeated exposure to these altered blood gas states can lead to vascular stress, which over time may contribute to the development of cerebral aneurysms in susceptible individuals. In those with pre-existing aneurysms, abrupt shifts in cerebral blood flow and pressure due to breath-holding or over-breathing could potentially increase the risk of aneurysm rupture. While this outcome is relatively rare, it is a serious complication and warrants caution-particularly for individuals with known vascular risk factors or a family history of aneurysms.

Psychiatric Disorders: Hypocapnia can trigger panic attacks, anxiety, and in extreme cases, increase suicidal tendencies. It can also exacerbate mania in bipolar disorder or psychotic symptoms in schizophrenia.

Eye Related Disorders: Reduced CO_2 levels can impair retinal and optic nerve perfusion due to vasoconstriction. This may lead to visual disturbances, including: Blurred or tunnel vision, Photophobia (light sensitivity), Temporary vision loss or visual "snow", Eye strain or discomfort, In patients with glaucoma or elevated intraocular pressure, these vascular changes could potentially exacerbate symptoms or affect optic nerve health.

Ear Related Disorders: The inner ear is highly sensitive to CO_2 and pH changes. Hypocapnia can lead to: Dizziness or vertigo due to vestibular dysfunction, Tinnitus (ringing in the ears), A sensation of ear fullness or pressure, Possible disruption of balance and spatial orientation, These symptoms are particularly common during or after hyperventilation episodes and may be misinterpreted as primary ENT or neurological disorders.

Memory and Concentration Problems: Rapid breathing techniques can impair brain function by decreasing CO_2 levels, leading to memory loss, difficulty focusing, and confusion, particularly in individuals with cognitive vulnerabilities.

Chapter 15.
Scientific Basis: What You Should Know About Hypoxia (Low Oxygen Levels)

Hypoxia refers to a state in which the body or a region of the body is deprived of adequate oxygen supply at the tissue level. It can occur acutely or chronically, and is sometimes an unintended consequence of breathwork practices-particularly when breath retention is performed before or after rapid breathing (hyperventilation). This sequencing, common in many advanced breathwork techniques, can significantly alter blood gas levels-lowering CO_2 and restricting oxygen availability-thereby increasing the risk of hypoxia." (as in many advanced pranayama or modern methods like the Wim Hof technique or Sudarshan Kriya).

How Hypocapnia Can Lead to Hypoxia

During hyperventilation, excessive exhalation of CO_2 causes hypocapnia. This low CO_2 level triggers vasoconstriction, particularly in the brain and coronary circulation, reducing blood flow. When this is followed by breath retention, oxygen is consumed without replenishment. Due to the already impaired circulation, oxygen delivery is compromised, increasing the risk of hypoxia. This effect can be amplified if the practitioner uses muscular locks (bandhas) or postural inversions, which can further affect venous return and cerebral oxygenation.

During hyperventilation, rapid, deep breathing causes excessive exhalation of CO_2, leading to hypocapnia. This reduction in CO_2 results in cerebral and coronary vasoconstriction, thereby decreasing blood flow and oxygen delivery to tissues. When breath retention follows hyperventilation, oxygen consumption continues without fresh oxygen intake, compounding the risk of hypoxia due to the already reduced cerebral perfusion.

Conversely, when breath retention precedes hyperventilation, the breath-hold causes a temporary buildup of CO_2 and a decrease in oxygen levels. Upon resuming rapid breathing, the subsequent hypocapnia and respiratory alkalosis can cause abrupt changes in vascular tone and blood gas balance, potentially destabilizing cerebral blood flow and oxygenation.

In both scenarios, the combined effects of altered CO_2 and O_2 levels may be further exacerbated by practices such as muscular locks (bandhas) or postural inversions, which can impair venous return and cerebral perfusion, increasing the risk of hypoxia and vascular stress.

How Hypoxia in Turn Can Be Harmful To Health

Neurological Conditions: Brain tissue is highly sensitive to oxygen levels. Hypoxia can cause confusion, difficulty concentrating, slurred speech, and impaired coordination In more severe cases: seizures, syncope, or loss of consciousness. Chronic or repeated exposure to mild hypoxia (as in long-term breath retention practices) may contribute to cognitive decline, neuroinflammation, or increased vulnerability to strokes. Individuals with epilepsy, migraine, stroke history, or traumatic brain injury are especially vulnerable

Cardiovascular Conditions: Hypoxia increases the heart's workload as it tries to compensate by pumping more blood. This may lead to arrhythmias, chest pain, or cardiac ischemia. In those with coronary artery disease, this can trigger angina or a myocardial infarction (heart attack). Sudden hypoxia during deep retention may induce vasovagal syncope or blood pressure collapse in predisposed individuals

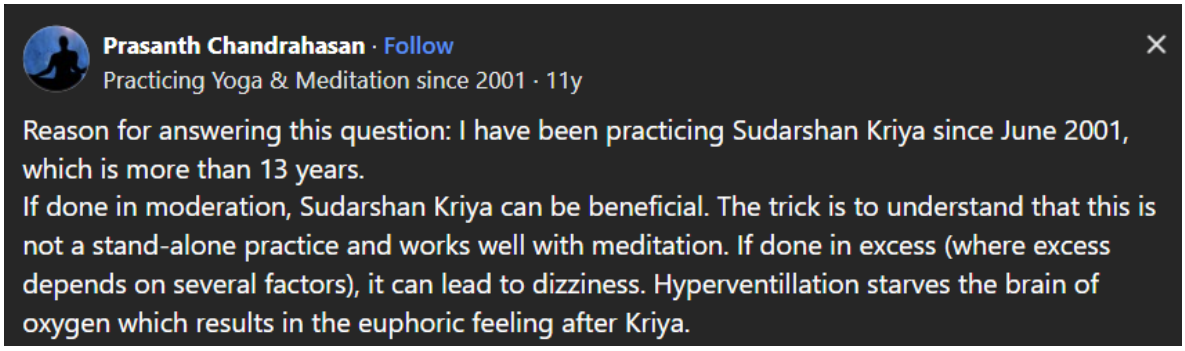
Pulmonary Conditions: People with asthma, COPD, or restrictive lung disease may experience exacerbation of symptoms during breath-holding, episodes of air hunger, chest tightness, or cyanosis, risk of respiratory acidosis if hypoxia is prolonged without CO_2 compensation. These individuals may have reduced ventilatory reserve, making it harder to recover from oxygen deprivation. Prolonged apnea can trigger bronchospasm or worsen ventilation-perfusion mismatch, further compromising gas exchange.

Psychiatric Disorders: Hypoxia can significantly impact mood, behaviour, and perception, sometimes triggering panic attacks, feelings of derealization, or depressive symptoms. In vulnerable individuals, it may exacerbate bipolar episodes or worsen psychotic symptoms. Furthermore, chronic intermittent hypoxia has the potential to disrupt neurotransmitter balance, which could contribute to long-term mental health challenges.

Ophthalmologic Effects: Reduced oxygen can compromise retinal and optic nerve perfusion, resulting in blurred vision, transient blindness, or visual snow, increased risk of worsening in those with diabetic retinopathy, glaucoma, or retinal vascular disorders

ENT and Vestibular Effects: The inner ear is oxygen-sensitive due to which hypoxia can cause vertigo, tinnitus, and imbalance. It may be misattributed to ENT conditions when actually related to cerebral or vestibular hypoxia from breathwork

Memory and Cognitive Function: Short-term hypoxia impairs working memory, recall, and executive function. Chronic hypoxia may lead to mild cognitive impairment (MCI) or accelerate neurodegeneration. Particularly risky in older adults or individuals with vascular cognitive impairment


Prasanth Chandrahasan · Follow
Practicing Yoga & Meditation since 2001 · 11y
Reason for answering this question: I have been practicing Sudarshan Kriya since June 2001, which is more than 13 years.
If done in moderation, Sudarshan Kriya can be beneficial. The trick is to understand that this is not a stand-alone practice and works well with meditation. If done in excess (where excess depends on several factors), it can lead to dizziness. Hyperventillation starves the brain of oxygen which results in the euphoric feeling after Kriya.

Chapter 16.
Scientific Basis: What You Should Know About Respiratory Alkalosis

Respiratory Alkalosis occurs when blood pH levels rise, often as a result of rapid breathing (hyperventilation). This shift in pH can lead to electrolyte imbalances, which may cause muscle spasms, cramps, dizziness, and fainting. Additionally, alkalosis can worsen existing heart conditions, increase the risk of arrhythmias, and trigger panic or anxiety episodes.

How Respiratory Alkalosis Affects Health Conditions

Cardiovascular conditions: Respiratory alkalosis, characterized by elevated blood pH due to rapid or deep breathing, can disrupt normal cardiovascular function. It may lead to irregular heart rhythms (arrhythmias), an increased heart rate (tachycardia), and fluctuations in blood pressure, which can put significant stress on the heart. For individuals with pre-existing heart conditions such as coronary artery disease, heart failure, or hypertension, these changes can exacerbate symptoms, potentially leading to more severe complications, including an increased risk of heart attacks or other cardiovascular events.

Diabetes: Alkalosis can worsen blood sugar fluctuations, increasing the risk of dizziness, fainting, and blackouts. It may also trigger heart-related events-such as irregular heartbeats (arrhythmias), rapid heart rate (tachycardia), chest pain or pressure (angina), and even heart attacks, particularly in individuals with diabetes, who are already at elevated risk for cardiovascular disease. For diabetics with well-controlled blood sugar, fast breathing exercises may lead to mild symptoms like dizziness, tingling, or muscle cramps due to disruption of the acid-base balance, but the risk of serious complications like diabetic ketoacidosis (DKA) is low.

However, for those with poorly controlled blood sugar, skipped insulin doses, or erratic insulin use, the combination of hyperventilation and high blood sugar can increase the likelihood of DKA, which can cause severe dehydration, electrolyte imbalances, vomiting, and potentially life-threatening conditions.

Symptoms of DKA include excessive thirst, fruity-smelling breath, nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, rapid breathing, and tachycardia (an abnormally fast heart rate). Diabetics should also monitor for these symptoms of DKA, as early recognition is crucial for preventing serious complications. Consistent practice of fast breathing exercises for 15 to 20 minutes daily could exacerbate respiratory alkalosis, especially if blood sugar is not stable or if stress is involved, making it essential for diabetics to monitor their blood sugar levels closely and consult a healthcare provider before engaging in intense breathwork.

Pregnancy: Alkalosis may affect blood flow and oxygen delivery to both the mother and foetus, leading to dizziness, breathlessness, and rapid heart rate, which can compromise maternal and foetal health.

Psychiatric Disorders: Alkalosis can make symptoms worse for people with anxiety, PTSD, or bipolar disorder. Anxiety often leads to rapid breathing, which lowers the level of CO2 in the blood, making it more alkaline.

This can make people with these conditions more sensitive to exercises that cause alkalosis, like fast breathing techniques. As these exercises aggravate the body's natural predisposition to alkalosis, the negative effects, like panic attacks, increased anxiety, and even suicidal thoughts, can appear faster and be more severe.

If someone has anxiety, PTSD, or other mental health conditions, it's important to be careful with exercises that change the body's pH, like Bhastrika or rapid breathing. These exercises can make feelings of panic and distress worse and may increase suicidal thoughts. Since they can speed up and intensify the negative effects of alkalosis, it's always a good idea to talk to a doctor or mental health professional before trying these exercises to make sure they won't harm your mental health.

Chapter 17.
Scientific Basis: What You Should Know About Carpopedal Spasms

Carpopedal spasms occur when there are imbalances in electrolytes, especially calcium and magnesium. These imbalances are often triggered by hypocapnia (low CO2 levels) and alkalosis, which can result from rapid breathing exercises. The spasms can be painful and may worsen existing conditions related to the heart, respiratory system, or nervous system.

How Carpopedal Spasms Can Be Harmful To Health

Electrolyte Imbalances:

Carpopedal spasms are directly linked to low calcium and magnesium levels, commonly caused by alkalosis and hypocapnia. These spasms primarily affect the hands and feet but can spread to other muscles. Practicing rapid breathing exercises can exacerbate these spasms, leading to increased pain and discomfort, especially if the individual already has underlying electrolyte imbalances.

Respiratory Disorders:

For individuals with asthma, COPD, or other respiratory conditions, rapid breathing exercises that lead to hypocapnia and alkalosis can worsen breathing difficulties, trigger muscle spasms, and make it harder to manage lung conditions. This may result in shortness of breath, wheezing, or even an asthma attack in sensitive individuals.

Cardiovascular Conditions:

Muscle spasms caused by electrolyte imbalances can increase the risk of arrhythmias (irregular heartbeats) and other heart complications. In people with existing heart conditions, practicing fast breathing exercises can trigger these arrhythmias, cause palpitations, or contribute to blood pressure instability, increasing the risk of more severe heart problems.

Diabetes:

Diabetics are more prone to electrolyte imbalances and carpopedal spasms, as fluctuations in blood sugar levels can disrupt calcium and magnesium balance. When people with diabetes practice rapid breathing exercises, they may experience an increased risk of electrolyte disturbances, leading to muscle cramps, spasms, and potential worsening of blood sugar control. These symptoms can make managing diabetes more difficult and may lead to further complications like dizziness or fainting.

Hypocapnia (low co_2) leads to reduced blood flow to the brain and other organs, which increases the risk of neurological events, heart attacks, and strokes. Alkalosis (high blood pH) causes electrolyte imbalances, which may trigger muscle spasms, cramps, dizziness, fainting, and other serious symptoms. Carpopedal Spasms (muscle cramps in the hands and feet) are often triggered by changes in blood pH and CO_2 levels, leading to painful cramps and muscle weakness.

If you have any of the above conditions or concerns, it's important to consult a healthcare provider before attempting rapid or intense breathing techniques. These exercises can trigger or exacerbate existing health issues, so always proceed with caution and medical guidance.

Chapter 18.
Scientifically Plausible Causes of Reported Adverse Reactions and How to Identify Symptoms of Side Effects

Many people practice Sudarshan Kriya, Bhastrika, and Ujjayi Pranayama seeking peace, healing, or improved health. But what is often overlooked is that these breathing practices are not "light wellness routines." They are powerful interventions that can significantly influence brain chemistry, circulation, lung function, and even hormone balance.

Sudarshan Kriya is defined in research papers published by **THE ART OF LIVING FOUNDATION** as a cyclical, rhythmic breathing technique.

- It is preceded by **Three-Stage Pranayama**, which includes deep breathing, **22 instances of breath-holding and suspension (which have its own set of health risks and precautions)**, preparing the body for more intense breathwork.
- This is followed by **Bhastrika Pranayama**, consisting of **60 fast and forceful breaths**, intended to stimulate and energize the system.
- The main kriya involves a sequence of slow, medium, and rapid breathing rhythms.
- Altogether, the daily practice includes **over 120 rapid breaths with the 60 fast forceful breaths in Bhastrika Pranayama phase, making it 180 fast breaths in all,** combined along with 22 repetitions of breath retentions and suspensions-a level of intensity that warrants careful consideration.
- The practice is said to harmonize the body, mind, and emotions by modulating the autonomic nervous system.

According to **THE ART OF LIVING FOUNDATION**, it helps reduce stress, anxiety, and depression while promoting emotional stability and clarity. It is also claimed to enhance immune function, sleep quality, and antioxidant activity, based on selectively cited short term studies.

The **prescribed daily home practice** lasts up to **40 minutes**, while the **weekly follow-up session** is a longer, more intense version that can extend to **an hour or more**.

However, the technique includes intense breathwork phases that may not be safe for everyone-particularly individuals with cardiovascular, neurological, or respiratory conditions. Yet, proper screening is rarely emphasized, and critical health risks or precautions are neither published on the official website nor included in the app or online instructions.

When practiced correctly and by individuals whose mind-body constitution can tolerate its intensity, Sudarshan Kriya may offer significant benefits. However, when done improperly, too forcefully, or by those with certain health conditions, it can lead to unwanted-and in some cases, harmful-physical or psychological effects.

In short, these techniques can either heal or harm, depending on:

- Who is practicing (their health history and existing health risks)
- How they are practiced (technique, intensity, supervision)

Whether risks are screened and managed properly and whether the practice is adjusted safely to match a person's health condition-by modifying, customizing, or avoiding certain techniques as needed. If health risks or contraindications-particularly those involving psychiatric conditions or issues related to the heart, blood vessels, lungs, brain, kidneys, or nervous system-are undiagnosed, inadequately screened by instructors, or overlooked even after participants disclose them, and if individuals are taught breathing practices without being clearly informed about the associated risks and the necessary precautions or modifications, serious dangers may develop when they begin practicing techniques involving breath-holding, bandhas, or rapid-breathing methods, especially over the longer term of several weeks, months, or even years.

1. Over-Breathing And Carbon Dioxide Crash (Hypocapnia)

What happens:

Breathing at a fast or rapid pace, particularly during the fast cycles of Sudarshan Kriya as well as when doing Bhastrika intensely and at a fast pace, reduces the body's carbon dioxide (CO_2) levels, leading to a condition known as hypocapnia. **THE ART OF LIVING FOUNDATION'S** Medical Information Form acknowledges this, stating: ***"During the rapid cycle phase of SKY, there can be transiently decreased CO_2 levels (hypocapnia), and therefore a decrease in arterial CO_2 levels, which in and of itself..."***

This shows that the practice of Sudarshan Kriya is officially recognized by the organization as capable of inducing hypocapnia, at least during the rapid breathing phase. When performed daily over extended periods-months or years-this repeated reduction in CO_2 may result in chronic or recurrent hypocapnia.

Such a state can have a range of adverse effects, depending on an individual's overall health, existing medical conditions, and comorbidities.

Possible effects on the body:

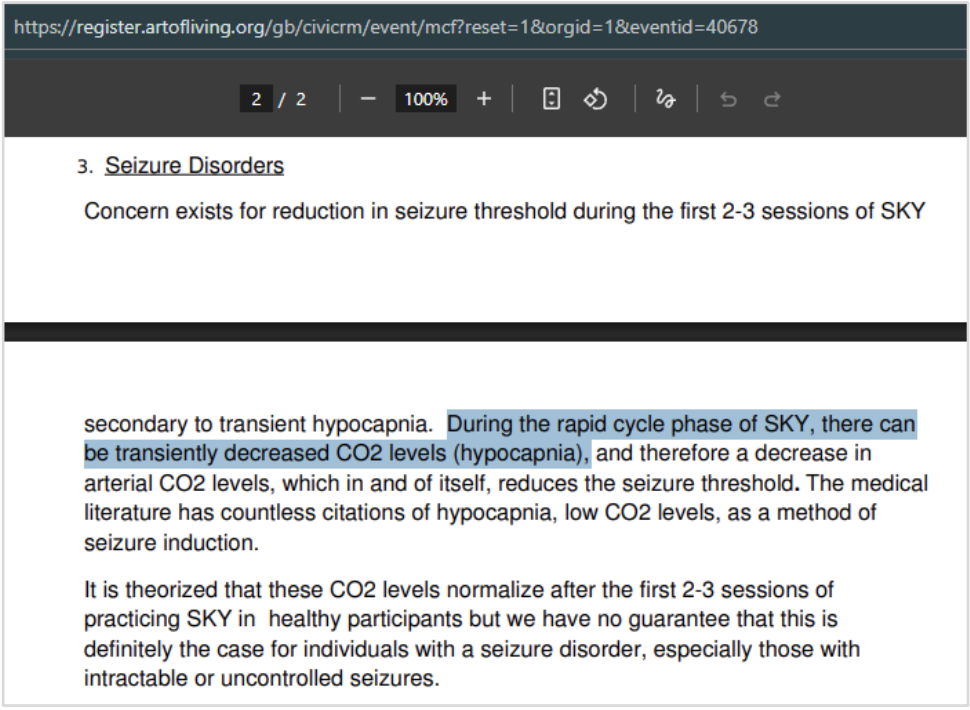
- Constricted blood vessels in the brain, Reduced oxygen delivery to brain tissue, Disturbed acid–base balance in the blood (respiratory alkalosis)

What someone might feel:

- Dizziness or light-headedness, Tingling in fingers, toes, or face, confusion or brain fog, painful muscle cramps in hands or feet (carpopedal spasms)

Why this happens:

CO_2 normally helps keep blood vessels open. When CO_2 levels drop too low due to fast and forceful breathing or what is called hyperventilation, blood vessels constrict, oxygen supply falls, and nerve activity becomes unstable-causing dizziness, numbness, and cramps.


https://register.artofliving.org/gb/civicrm/event/mcf?reset=1&orgid=1&eventid=40678

2 / 2 — 100%

3. Seizure Disorders

Concern exists for reduction in seizure threshold during the first 2-3 sessions of SKY

secondary to transient hypocapnia. During the rapid cycle phase of SKY, there can be transiently decreased CO2 levels (hypocapnia), and therefore a decrease in arterial CO2 levels, which in and of itself, reduces the seizure threshold. The medical literature has countless citations of hypocapnia, low CO2 levels, as a method of seizure induction.

It is theorized that these CO2 levels normalize after the first 2-3 sessions of practicing SKY in healthy participants but we have no guarantee that this is definitely the case for individuals with a seizure disorder, especially those with intractable or uncontrolled seizures.

2. Strain On The Heart And Circulation

What happens:

Forceful breathing (as in Bhastrika) and breath-holding during the three stage pranayama and bandhas stimulate the “fight or flight” or Sympathetic Nervous System. This leads to increased heart rate, elevated blood pressure, and vasoconstriction (narrowing of blood vessels). Breath retention (especially after inhalation) raises pressure inside the chest. This can reduce blood return to the heart, momentarily lowering cardiac output and then sharply increasing it- putting strain on the heart. Holding the breath alters normal oxygen and carbon dioxide levels. This can trigger irregular heart rhythms or dizziness, especially in vulnerable individuals.

Who is at risk:

- People with high blood pressure, heart disease, genetic predisposition, comorbities or diabetes (According to the American Heart Association, people with diabetes are about twice as likely to develop heart disease or related cardiovascular conditions.)
- Anyone with arrhythmias, a history of stroke, or family heart problems
- Older adults, senior citizens or those on cardiovascular medication

Possible effects:

- Dangerous spikes in blood pressure, Irregular heartbeat or palpitations. Higher risk of heart attack or stroke, Sudden fainting spells

What someone might feel:

- Chest pain or tightness, Heart racing, fluttering or skipping beats, Dizziness, nausea, or cold sweats, Sudden loss of consciousness, Blackout or fainting

3. Breathing Stress And Lung Issues

What happens:

Fast or forceful breathing strains the lungs and airways.

Who is at risk:

- People with asthma, COPD, or recent respiratory infections
- Those prone to bronchospasm or airway sensitivity

Possible effects:

- Asthma attacks or bronchospasms, Shortness of breath or panic sensations, Lung fatigue or collapse (fainting from lack of oxygen)

What someone might feel:

- Wheezing or difficulty breathing, Chest tightness or pressure, A sense of “air hunger” or panic

4. Neurological Stress And Migraine Risk

What happens:

Rapid breathing lowers CO_2 (hypocapnia), reducing brain blood flow through vasoconstriction, while breath-holding raises CO_2, also stressing circulation. Rapid breathing and breath-holding can disrupt

blood flow to the brain and trigger neurological stress. These shifts in oxygen and CO_2 can overstimulate the brain, triggering migraines, seizures, or TIAs in sensitive individuals. Breath retention may increase intracranial pressure, worsening conditions like aneurysms, migraines, or vascular eye issues.

Who is at risk:

- People with migraines, seizures, or epilepsy
- Those with past strokes, TIAs, or blood vessel conditions
- Anyone with aneurysms, hypertension, or vision-related vascular problems

Possible effects:

- More frequent or severe migraines. Seizures in sensitive individuals. Temporary vision changes (blurring, dimming, flashing lights). Stroke-like episodes in rare cases

What someone might feel:

- Sudden intense headaches or eye pressure, Blurred or altered vision, Dizziness, blackouts, or confusion, Tingling, numbness, or speech difficulties

5. Digestive, Hormonal, And Reproductive Effects

What happens:

Breath retention and abdominal contractions increase abdominal pressure, disturb blood flow, and overstimulate the autonomic nervous system.

Who is at risk:

- People with IBS, ulcers, or hernias
- Women with hormonal imbalances, fertility issues, or menopause
- Those with endocrine conditions (thyroid, adrenal, etc.)

Possible effects:

- Worsening digestive symptoms (bloating, cramps, constipation), Hormonal disruptions, including irregular cycles or fertility problems, Increased menopausal symptoms

What someone might feel:

- Abdominal pain or discomfort, Menstrual irregularities, Sudden mood swings

6. Eye And Ear Pressure Problems

What happens:

Breath-holding and vigorous breathing increase **cranial pressure**, affecting delicate structures of the eyes and ears.

Who is at risk:

- People with glaucoma, retinal disease, or chronic ear problems

Possible effects:

- Higher eye pressure worsening glaucoma, Retinal strain or even damage, Ear pain, vertigo, or balance issues

What someone might feel:

- Eye discomfort or blurred vision or Flashes of light in vision, Ringing in the ears or dizziness

7. Mental Health And Emotional Instability

What happens:

Rapid, fast and cyclical breathing and breath holding exercises can change brain chemistry and can induce **altered states of consciousness**. While some find this uplifting, others may feel destabilized.

Who is at risk:

- People with **bipolar disorder**, who may enter manic states
- Trauma survivors or those with **PTSD**, or **complex PTSD** who may experience flashbacks
- People with **anxiety disorders**, where hyperventilation can mimic panic
- Individuals with **schizophrenia or psychosis**, where symptoms may worsen

Possible effects:

- Emotional instability, panic attacks, or dissociation, Flashbacks or resurfacing trauma memories, Manic episodes, hallucinations, or paranoia, Increase in suicidal thoughts & urge (especially with medication interactions)

What someone might feel:

- Sudden mood swings or intense anxiety, Feeling detached from reality, Overwhelming euphoria followed by distress, Hallucinations or paranoid thoughts

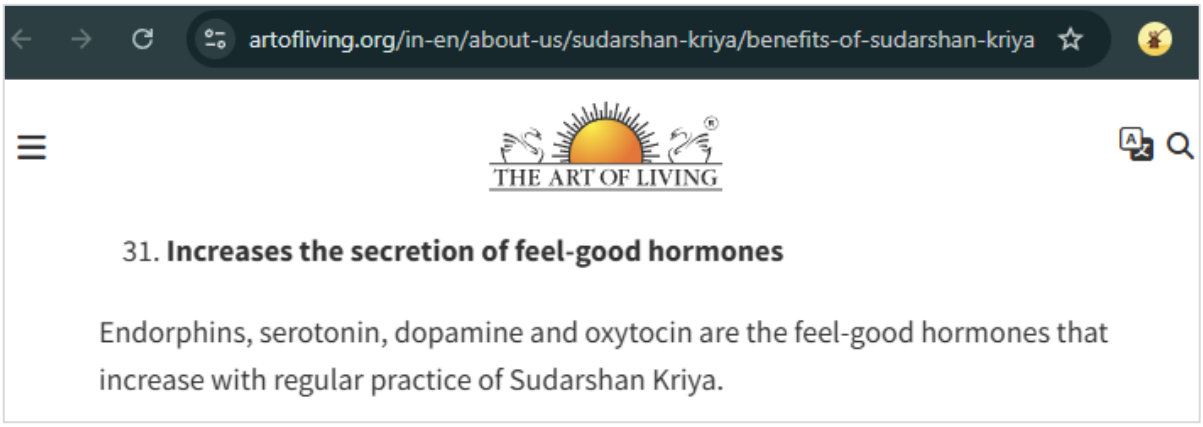
Sudarshan Kriya Yoga Causes Changes in Brain Chemistry:

Sudarshan Kriya Yoga has been found and documented to increase the levels of powerful brain chemicals that strongly influence mood and perception. For many, this creates feelings of calm, upliftment, or even bliss. However, in sensitive individuals or those with underlying psychiatric conditions, these same neurochemical shifts may destabilize mood, trigger psychiatric symptoms, or worsen pre-existing mental health conditions. In people taking medications that already raise alter brain chemistry, the additional surge may contribute to a dangerous state of possible imbalance marked by agitation, rapid heartbeat, muscle rigidity, confusion, and in severe cases, suicidality. or manic episodes or psychosis in vulnerable individuals if these practices are undertaken without medical guidance and close monitoring.

Unknown said...

Hyperventilating causes ocygen deficiency. This is very basic knowledge that is missing from fire breath practices and sudarshan kriya is simply a recycled version of fire breath. When the system releases too much carbon dioxide through hyperventilation, oxygen is no longer properly delivered from the red blood cells to the brain. The body then releases endorphins as a counter measure because oxygen deficiency is threatening. This endorphin rush is a major reason for the blissfull relaxation after hyperventilating practices. There is nothing healing about it and it most likely doesn't enhance awareness. Over time, hyperventilating can damage health due to the increased free radical production it induces.

DECEMBER 9, 2009 AT 2:10 PM


artofliving.org/in-en/about-us/sudarshan-kriya/benefits-of-sudarshan-kriya
THE ART OF LIVING
31. Increases the secretion of feel-good hormones
Endorphins, serotonin, dopamine and oxytocin are the feel-good hormones that increase with regular practice of Sudarshan Kriya.

Chapter 19. Possible Mechanisms that Explain the How Adverse Effects Can Occur

Sudarshan Kriya Yoga (SKY) is promoted as a universally safe, spiritually uplifting breathing practice suitable for everyone. Marketing material repeatedly presents it as free of risk, side effects, or contraindications. Yet, when hundreds of publicly shared experiences are gathered from forums, recovery groups, health communities, mental-health discussions, and anonymous accounts, a different and far more complex picture emerges.

The reports describe patterns of adverse effects-physical, neurological, psychological, and emotional-that are strikingly consistent and medically explainable. When scattered across the internet, these stories appear isolated. But once compiled, the same themes repeat: cardiac discomfort, panic attacks, migraines, dissociation, manic episodes, intrusive thoughts, breathing difficulties, dizziness, sleep disturbances, emotional crashes, and in rare cases, stroke- or heart-attack–like events.

None of these reactions are mysterious. They arise directly from the physiological effects of the technique itself: intense rapid breathing, forced breath retention, recurrent alternation between sympathetic and parasympathetic extremes, rapid fluctuations in blood gases, and sensory overstimulation. These mechanisms are well documented in medical literature. Any intervention that manipulates breathing so aggressively will also manipulate blood flow, brain function, autonomic balance, and emotional regulation.

This chapter explains why these adverse effects occur, how they affect vulnerable individuals, and what physiological mechanisms are responsible. It is written to be scientifically rigorous and medically accurate, while still understandable to the general reader. Every section provides both a technical and a plain-language explanation.

The goal is not to pathologize SKY nor to dismiss its potential benefits for some people-but to restore balance, transparency, and informed decision-making. No medical or psychological intervention is ever "risk-free." SKY should be held to the same standard.

Cardiovascular Adverse Effects

Scientific Mechanism and Medical Rationale

Sudarshan Kriya involves bursts of rapid breathing that sharply reduce carbon dioxide (CO_2) levels in the bloodstream. CO_2 is essential for maintaining normal blood vessel diameter; when levels fall, blood vessels constrict. This vasoconstriction raises blood pressure and reduces blood flow to the heart and brain. Breath retentions cause adrenaline surges, forcing the heart to beat harder while also increasing

oxygen demand. At the same time, rapid changes in chest pressure alter venous return and destabilize the baroreflex-the system that helps regulate blood pressure.

These sudden shifts in vascular tone, oxygen supply, and cardiac load can provoke arrhythmias, hypertensive spikes, chest pain, and-if underlying vulnerability is present-coronary artery spasm, stroke, or even heart attack. Hyperventilation also alters electrolytes such as calcium, temporarily destabilizing the heart's electrical conduction pathways.

What This Means:

Fast breathing causes your blood vessels to tighten and your blood pressure to rise. Holding your breath afterward floods your body with adrenaline, making your heart beat harder. If someone has high blood pressure or even mild, undiagnosed heart disease, this combination can be dangerous: the heart suddenly needs more oxygen at the same moment the blood vessels supplying it are narrowing. This can lead to chest pain, irregular heartbeats, very high blood pressure, fainting, or-in rare but medically plausible cases-a heart attack or stroke.

Scientific Mechanisms Behind Cardiovascular Risk

Sudarshan Kriya Yoga (SKY) is often promoted as a universally safe and "heart-friendly" practice. However, the technique incorporates rapid breathing cycles, forced hyperventilation, strong exhalations, and breath retentions - all of which dramatically alter cardiovascular physiology. For individuals with hypertension, heart disease, arrhythmias, vascular fragility, or undiagnosed cardiovascular vulnerabilities, these changes can pose significant risk. Most marketing materials from THE ART OF LIVING present SKY as improving cardiovascular health, but **no publicly available source from the organization acknowledges the possibility of cardiac complications**, blood pressure spikes, arrhythmias, syncope, hypertensive crises, or major cardiovascular events. Yet hundreds of scattered public testimonials report such symptoms - and medically, the mechanisms are well established and predictable.

This section aims to provide a clear, scientific, accessible explanation of why cardiovascular events may occur during or after SKY. These risks are not theoretical; they follow directly from established cardiopulmonary physiology. **These more serious events are *not only possible*, but *medically explainable* exactly through the physiological mechanisms of Sudarshan Kriya.**

Here are the **scientific reasons** why:

A. Hyperventilation → Hypocapnia → Blood Vessel Constriction

Rapid breathing removes CO_2 faster than the body can produce it. This leads to **hypocapnia**, which causes:

- **Vasoconstriction** (narrowing of blood vessels)

- **Reduced oxygen delivery** to organs
- **Increased blood pressure**
- **Greater cardiac workload**

Coronary arteries and cerebral vessels constrict as well - explaining chest pain and neurological symptoms.

B. Breath Retention → Sympathetic Surge

SKY includes breath retention phases (kumbhaka), which:

- Trigger **fight-or-flight activation**
- Increase **adrenaline and noradrenaline**
- Raise **heart rate and blood pressure** sharply
- Increase **myocardial oxygen demand**

For vulnerable individuals, this surge alone can precipitate a crisis.

C. Rapid Oscillation of Intrathoracic Pressure

The SKY sequence alternates between:

- Retention (Three Stage Pranayama)
- High-volume rapid breathing (Bhastrika)
- Retention (Bandhas)
- High-volume rapid breathing again (Short or Fast Cycle of Sudarshan Kriya)

This "pressure cycling" destabilizes:

- Blood pressure regulation
- Heart rhythm
- Baroreflex sensitivity

In people with arrhythmia tendencies, this can trigger:

- Atrial fibrillation
- SVT episodes
- PVC storms
- Ventricular irritability

D. Electrolyte Shifts

Hyperventilation reduces calcium ion availability in the blood (because alkalosis changes binding properties). This destabilizes electrical conduction in the heart.

For individuals with:

- Heart disease
- PAC/PVC history
- QT prolongation
- Electrolyte imbalances
- Anxiety-related palpitations

this creates a high-risk environment.

E. Coronary Artery Spasm (Documented Phenomenon)

Hyperventilation is a known trigger of coronary artery spasm even in healthy individuals. Spasm reduces or blocks blood flow to the heart muscle - a direct pathway to:

- Angina
- Myocardial ischemia
- Heart attack

SKY can possibly create the physiological conditions for this spasm to occur especially when practiced chronically for long duration and intense sessions over many months or years.

F. Hypertensive Crisis Trigger

Between rapid breathing and sympathetic surges, people with hypertension experience:

- Sudden blood vessel constriction
- Increased cardiac output
- Blood pressure spikes

This can escalate into **hypertensive urgency** or **hypertensive emergency**, especially when multiple rounds are performed. Individuals with cardiovascular vulnerability may experience:

Mild to moderate symptoms:

- Palpitations/ Rapid heart rate
- Chest tightness
- Shortness of breath
- Dizziness/Light-headedness/Feeling faint

Severe symptoms (high-risk):

- Irregular heartbeat (arrhythmias)
- Severe chest pain

- Severe headache
- Sudden surge in blood pressure / Hypertensive crisis
- Loss of consciousness/fainting

Life-threatening symptoms (reported in public accounts):

- Heart attack, Stroke
- TIAs (mini-strokes)
- Sudden collapse or loss of consciousness

These outcomes are **medically plausible** and fully explainable considering SKY's breathing dynamics.

Why Heart Attacks Can Occur from Fast Breathing Exercises

Heart attacks in this context typically arise due to:

1. Coronary artery spasm

Hyperventilation-induced vasoconstriction in heart arteries.

2. Plaque rupture

Sudden BP spikes can rupture existing plaque, causing blockage.

3. Myocardial oxygen mismatch

Adrenaline surges increase oxygen demand while hypocapnia reduces supply.

4. Arrhythmia-induced ischemia

Irregular heartbeats can destabilize cardiac perfusion.

Even individuals with **borderline, undiagnosed, or mild coronary disease** are at risk.

Why Strokes Can Occur from Fast Breathing Exercises

Strokes become possible due to:

1. Cerebral vasoconstriction from hypocapnia

This reduces blood flow to the brain.

2. Hypertensive spikes

Sharp increases in blood pressure can rupture weak vessels.

3. Reduced oxygenation

Lowered CO_2 means less oxygen delivery to the brain.

4. Cardioembolic risk

Arrhythmia triggered by SKY can dislodge clots.

These mechanisms explain public accounts of: visual disturbances and severe headache

Respiratory Adverse Effects

Mechanisms

Rapid, forceful breathing increases turbulence in the airways and stresses sensitive bronchial tissue. In individuals with asthma or airway hyperreactivity, this irritation can trigger bronchospasm-sudden tightening of the airways. Hypocapnia reduces the natural respiratory drive, creating the unsettling sensation of air hunger even while breathing heavily. In COPD, rapid breathing worsens airway collapse and reduces effective gas exchange. These interactions can escalate into coughing fits, wheezing, or acute shortness of breath.

Common Explanation

Breathing very fast irritates the lungs. People with asthma or sensitive airways may suddenly feel their chest tighten or hear wheezing begin. Even people without lung disease may feel as though they "can't breathe" because their CO_2 levels drop too quickly. This can cause panic, gasping, and the frightening sense of not getting enough air.

Neurological Adverse Effects

Mechanisms

The brain depends on CO_2 to regulate its blood flow. When CO_2 drops, cerebral blood vessels constrict, reducing the brain's oxygen supply. This can cause dizziness, confusion, visual distortion, tinnitus, and fainting. Respiratory alkalosis (a rise in blood pH from rapid breathing) alters calcium and potassium availability, increasing neuronal excitability and lowering the seizure threshold-a well-known clinical phenomenon. For migraine-prone individuals, rapid shifts in cerebral perfusion can trigger aura or full migraine attacks.

Common Explanation

The brain gets less blood during intense fast breathing, which is why people often feel dizzy or lightheaded. Some faint. Migraines can be triggered, and people with seizure tendencies may experience seizure-like episodes. Numbness in the hands or around the mouth happens because blood chemistry changes quickly.

Psychiatric Adverse Effects

SKY alters breathing chemistry and sensory input in ways that directly influence brain circuits governing fear, mood, perception, and thought. For people with psychiatric vulnerabilities, the effects can be destabilizing.

A. Panic Disorder

Mechanisms

The brain has a built-in suffocation alarm that monitors CO_2. When CO_2 falls suddenly, this alarm is activated, triggering intense fear, bodily panic, and cognitive catastrophe. Individuals with panic disorder have a hypersensitive alarm system. Breathwork that forces hyperventilation therefore replicates a panic attack's physiology, activating catastrophic interpretations and reinforcing panic loops.

Common Explanation

Fast breathing tricks the brain into thinking you are suffocating. If you have panic disorder, the sensations become frightening very quickly-heart racing, chest tightness, dizziness-and the mind spirals into fear. Over time, this can make panic attacks more frequent.

B. Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD)

Mechanisms

OCD involves dysfunction of the cortico-striatal-thalamo-cortical circuit, which amplifies intrusive thoughts. Hypocapnia reduces blood flow to prefrontal areas that normally suppress such thoughts. Adrenaline surges heighten threat perception. This combination weakens inhibition while increasing obsessional drive, making intrusive thoughts more vivid and compulsions more urgent.

Common Explanation

In OCD, unwanted thoughts already feel too strong. Fast breathing reduces the brain's ability to quiet them and increases stress hormones that make them feel more urgent. The result is more intrusive thoughts and stronger compulsive urges.

C. PTSD & Trauma Disorders

Mechanisms

Trauma survivors have highly sensitized threat systems. The bodily sensations produced by SKY-racing heart, dizziness, numbness-mirror the sensations experienced during trauma. This reactivates traumatic memory

networks, overwhelms emotional regulation, and triggers dissociation or flashbacks. Hypocapnia specifically induces derealization, which trauma survivors often experience during dissociative episodes.

Common Explanation

If you have trauma, fast breathing recreates the physical signs of threat. This can bring back traumatic memories, trigger flashbacks, or cause a feeling of leaving your body. Instead of calming the nervous system, it overwhelms it.

D. Bipolar Disorder (Hypomania, Mania)

Mechanisms

The sympathetic surges and dopamine alterations caused by intense breathwork can push vulnerable individuals from hypomania into full mania. Respiratory alkalosis increases cortical excitability, and the euphoria some experience during SKY can be misinterpreted as spiritual awakening, reinforcing manic symptoms.

Common Explanation

Breathwork can push the nervous system into high gear. For someone with bipolar disorder, this extra stimulation can launch them into mania-reduced sleep, big risky decisions, racing thoughts, or even psychosis.

E. Psychotic Disorders (Schizophrenia, Schizoaffective)

Mechanisms

Hypocapnia causes sensory distortions. Reduced prefrontal control from altered blood flow weakens reality-checking. People with psychotic disorders may interpret bodily distortions or perceptual changes as external messages, hallucinations, or threats.

Common Explanation

When people breathe very fast or forcefully, it can cause unusual sensations such as buzzing, tingling, or flickering in vision. These changes occur because altered blood flow and reduced carbon dioxide affect the brain. In some individuals, especially those prone to anxiety or psychotic disorders, the brain may misinterpret these sensations as external voices or messages. This can make unusual perceptions feel more intense or real.. For someone prone to paranoia or hallucinations, this can make these experiences stronger or more confusing. Essentially, the body's signals get "misread" by the mind, which can worsen mental symptoms.

This can intensify paranoia or hallucinations. Paranoia may show up as intense distrust, feeling watched, or believing others intend to harm you. Hallucinations can involve hearing voices, seeing things that aren't

there, or sensing things others don't. Fast or forceful breathing may make these experiences stronger, more frequent, or harder to ignore.

F. Severe Depression, Post Partum Depression & Suicidality

Mechanisms

The emotional highs and lows triggered by autonomic swings destabilize mood regulation. Hypocapnia-driven cognitive impairment reduces resilience against intrusive or hopeless thoughts. Emotional flooding during breathwork may be followed by a sharp crash, deepening depressive symptoms.

Common Explanation

For someone already struggling with depression, the emotional rollercoaster can worsen sadness or hopeless thoughts. Some people report feeling lower after the session than before.

G. Trauma-Related Dissociation

Mechanisms

Hypocapnia reduces blood flow to sensory integration areas and disrupts coherent processing. Trauma survivors are especially prone to depersonalization and derealization. If overwhelming sensations occur repeatedly, dissociative mechanisms become reinforced.

Common Explanation

The dizzy, unreal feelings caused by fast breathing can make someone feel detached from themselves. If this happens again and again, the feeling can become long-lasting.

Autonomic Nervous System Dysregulation

Mechanisms

SKY repeatedly forces the body into sympathetic overdrive followed by parasympathetic collapse. This rapid cycling stresses the baroreflex and vagal pathways, reducing heart-rate variability and destabilizing blood pressure control. Over time, this can mimic or induce dysautonomia or POTS-like symptoms.

Common Explanation

Your body's "automatic settings" get confused by all the intense switching between stress and relaxation. Over time, this can cause fatigue, dizziness, heart-rate swings, and problems standing or exercising.

Endocrine & Metabolic Effects

Mechanisms

Adrenal surges raise cortisol and blood sugar. Parasympathetic rebounds then drop both. Repeated cycling disrupts stable hormonal rhythms. Respiratory alkalosis alters the sensitivity of hormone receptors and can interfere with thyroid and adrenal regulation.

Common Explanation

Fast breathing stresses your hormone system. Blood sugar and stress hormones jump up and down. This can cause shakiness, irritability, crashes afterward, or worsening symptoms for people with diabetes or thyroid problems.

General Symptoms in Otherwise Healthy Individuals

It is important to clarify that adverse reactions to Sudarshan Kriya Yoga are not limited to people with pre-existing medical or psychiatric diagnoses. Even individuals who are otherwise healthy-those with no heart disease, no anxiety disorders, no neurological vulnerabilities-can experience troubling symptoms during or after SKY.

This is not because they are "weak," "doing it wrong," or "overthinking."
It is because the physiological effects of rapid breathing and breath retentions are universal. Every human body responds to sudden CO_2 depletion, blood pH shifts, and autonomic surges in the same fundamental way.

The specific symptoms vary, but they originate from the same shared mechanisms described throughout this chapter. Below is a detailed explanation of why these reactions occur.

Mechanisms

1. CO_2 depletion (hypocapnia) and cerebral vasoconstriction

When breathing becomes faster and deeper than the metabolic demand, CO_2 is washed out from the blood. CO_2 plays a major role in regulating cerebral blood flow. When levels drop, cerebral vessels constrict. This reduces oxygen delivery to the brain by up to 40% in some cases. Even healthy people will experience dizziness, light-headedness, visual dimming, ringing in the ears, and difficulty thinking clearly.

2. Respiratory alkalosis and electrolyte shifts

Low CO_2 raises blood pH (respiratory alkalosis), which changes how calcium and potassium behave in nerve and muscle tissue. This increases the excitability of nerves and muscles, producing tingling, numbness, tremors, twitching, and even painful muscle cramps.

3. Sympathetic nervous system activation

Rapid breathing, especially followed by sudden breath holdings, acts as a physiological stressor. This triggers adrenaline and noradrenaline release, increasing heart rate, tightening chest muscles, and causing tremors, restlessness, and emotional agitation. Even people with no anxiety disorders can feel "wired," "flooded," or "emotionally overwhelmed."

4. Parasympathetic rebound and emotional drop

After the sympathetic surge comes a rebound into parasympathetic activation. This can cause fatigue, nausea, weakness, or emotional flatness. Many describe feeling "drained" or "empty" after the session, even if they initially experienced a high.

5. Sensory overload and dissociation mechanisms

The mismatch between what the body senses (dizziness, tingling, heartbeat changes) and what the person expects (calmness, relaxation) can create cognitive dissonance. Combined with reduced cerebral blood flow and rising pH, this can produce temporary derealization or depersonalization-feeling detached from one's body or surroundings.

6. Disrupted sleep–wake regulation

Adrenaline and cortisol spikes late in the day can interfere with sleep, causing insomnia or restless sleep patterns. The combination of autonomic cycling and hyper-alertness can keep the nervous system "revved up" long after the session ends.

Plain Explanation for Normal Readers

Even if you are perfectly healthy, Sudarshan Kriya can cause a variety of uncomfortable or frightening sensations-not because something is wrong with you, but because the breathing technique temporarily alters how your brain and body work.

Here's what happens in simple terms:

- **When you breathe too fast, you blow out too much carbon dioxide.**
  Your brain needs a certain amount of CO_2 to regulate blood flow. Without it, the blood vessels in your head tighten and your brain gets less oxygen. That's why you feel dizzy, foggy, or spaced out.
- **Low CO_2 also changes your blood chemistry.**
  This makes your nerves fire differently, so you may feel tingling in your fingers, around your mouth, or throughout your body.
- **Your stress hormones suddenly jump**.
  Fast breathing is a signal to your body that something exciting or dangerous is happening. This can cause chest tightness, trembling, or emotional highs.
- **After the high, your body often "crashes."**
  People commonly describe feeling very tired, shaky, or emotionally drained for hours afterward.
- **The strange sensations can be overwhelming.**
  If your brain can't make sense of them, you might feel unreal, detached, or "outside yourself"-even if you've never had such feelings before.
- **Sleep can be affected too.**
  If the session stimulates your nervous system too much, you may struggle to fall asleep or wake up feeling unrested.

These reactions do not require an underlying medical condition-they are basic physiological effects of overbreathing and autonomic overstimulation.

Common Symptoms Experienced by Healthy Individuals

- Dizziness & Light-headedness
  - Due to reduced cerebral blood flow from low CO_2.
- Tingling & Numbness
  - Caused by electrolyte shifts from respiratory alkalosis.
- Chest Tightness or Pressure
  - From muscle tension, adrenaline surges, and altered breathing mechanics.
- Tremors or Shaking
  - Driven by sympathetic activation and heightened neuromuscular excitability.

- Emotional Swings (high → low)
    - Resulting from rapid shifts between sympathetic and parasympathetic states.
- Insomnia or Restless Sleep
    - Due to elevated cortisol and residual stimulation.
- Brain Fog & Difficulty Concentrating
    - Linked to transient cerebral hypoperfusion.
- Nausea or Digestive Disturbance
    - Associated with disrupted vagal balance and diaphragm strain.
- Fatigue or Energy Crash
    - Caused by post-adrenaline depletion and parasympathetic rebound.
- Derealization / Feeling Detached
    - From sensory mismatch, reduced blood flow, and physiological overwhelm.

Why These Symptoms Matter

Although most healthy people recover from these sensations fairly quickly, they hold serious implications:

- They demonstrate that SKY is not a neutral relaxation technique-it significantly alters body chemistry.
- They can accumulate over time if someone practices daily without adequate recovery.
- They may reveal previously undiagnosed vulnerabilities.
- They can trigger panic or health anxiety in people who have never experienced such sensations.
- They show that “feeling bad during or after the session” is not user error-it is a predictable physiological outcome.

The presence of these symptoms in healthy individuals makes it clear why informed consent, medical screening, and honest risk communication are essential. Sudarshan Kriya Yoga is often described as universally safe, spiritually pure, and without contraindications. But any technique that manipulates breathing as intensely as SKY does will inevitably manipulate blood chemistry, brain function, heart activity, and emotional regulation. This does not make SKY “bad” - it makes it powerful, and powerful interventions demand transparency. The adverse effects documented across hundreds of personal accounts are not imaginary, rare, or inexplicable. They are entirely predictable from basic human physiology. Hyperventilation lowers CO_2. Low CO_2 constricts blood vessels. Blood vessel constriction alters heart function and brain function. Breath retention triggers adrenaline. Adrenaline alters mood,

cognition, and perception. These chains of cause and effect are real and grounded in established medical science.

A responsible approach would involve medical screening, clear warnings, differentiated practices for vulnerable individuals, and honest discussion of risks. A responsible organization would never claim universal safety for a technique that can precipitate panic attacks, dissociation, migraines, asthma attacks, manic episodes, arrhythmias, hypertensive crises, or-under the wrong conditions-life-threatening events. People deserve to make informed choices. This chapter exists so they finally can.

Chapter 20. Classical Yoga & Ayurvedic Perspectives

Clear Warnings From Classical Yoga Knowledge

Classical Yoga texts consistently caution against fast or forceful pranayama practices, emphasizing that breathwork is both powerful and delicate. The *Hatha Yoga Pradipika*, one of the foundational texts of Hatha Yoga, provides several verses that highlight the potential risks of improper breathing techniques.

Verse 2.15 states: *"Just as lions, elephants, and tigers are controlled gradually, so the prana is controlled by slow degrees; otherwise, it kills the practitioner."* This metaphor underscores the idea that controlling the life force, or prana, requires gradual, careful practice; rushing or forcing it can be harmful.

Verse 2.16 adds: *"When pranayama is performed properly, it eradicates all diseases; but an improper practice generates diseases."* Here, the text clearly distinguishes between the immense benefits of correct pranayama and the potential dangers of incorrect execution.

Verse 2.17 further explains: *"Hiccough, asthma, cough, pain in the head, ears, and eyes, and various other kinds of ailments are produced by disturbance of the breath."* This verse links physical illness directly to improper breathing practices, reinforcing the importance of precision, patience, and guidance.

Together, these teachings convey a consistent message: pranayama is a powerful tool for health and spiritual growth, but it must be approached with care, gradual progression, and proper instruction. Hasty, forceful, or uncontrolled breathwork is explicitly warned against, as it can lead to illness, injury, or imbalance. Classical Yoga knowledge, therefore, serves as an important reminder that even practices widely promoted for wellness must be respected and practiced responsibly.

Ayurvedic Knowledge Cautions On Fast Breathing And Dosha Imbalances

Classical Ayurveda emphasizes that the three doshas-Vata, Pitta, and Kapha-govern different aspects of physiology and mental functioning. Improper breathing practices can disturb these balances, potentially leading to both physical and mental health challenges.

Vata Aggravation

Vata is responsible for respiration, movement, and nervous system function. Rapid or forceful breathing can disturb Vata, leading to symptoms such as anxiety, restlessness, insomnia, tremors, irregular digestion, and muscle spasms. The *Charaka Samhita* (Sutrasthana 12.8) describes Vata as having qualities that are light, cold, rough, subtle, and mobile. It warns: *"When aggravated, it produces disorders such as*

pain, tremors, emptiness, insomnia, and irregularity of functions." Careful, controlled breathing is therefore essential to avoid disturbing Vata.

Pitta Aggravation

Pitta governs metabolism, transformation, and internal heat. Practices that generate excess heat-physiologically or emotionally-can increase Pitta, resulting in irritability, acid reflux, inflammation, overheating, and heightened emotional reactivity. The *Charaka Samhita* notes: *"Aggravated Pitta loosens the skin and arises from Pitta's seat."* Maintaining moderation in breathwork helps prevent excessive Pitta activation.

Kapha Reduction

Kapha supports stability, structure, and respiratory function. Certain breathing techniques can help reduce Kapha when necessary, but excessive or forceful practice can deplete it, leading to dryness, fatigue, and reduced physical and mental stability. Balanced breathwork is important to maintain Kapha within its optimal range.

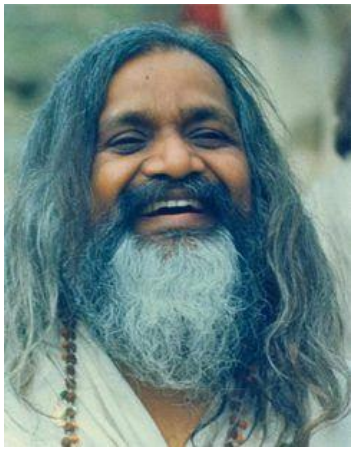
Together, these Ayurvedic insights underscore that breathing practices are not universally safe in the same way for all individuals. Dosha imbalances can arise from rapid, forceful, or unmoderated breathwork, highlighting the need for guidance, moderation, and individualized practice. Classical Ayurveda, therefore, aligns with Yoga's cautionary teachings: while breathwork is powerful, it must be approached thoughtfully to preserve balance and health.

Nandita Jayaram said...

The cleansing effects of the kriya is too much of hype. I have seen people get heat boils, skin rashes, tumors, heart Palpitatations and constant headaches from the practise of SK. Most AOL teachers urge people to continue as they feel it is a cleansing process. But in many cases the symptoms are due to imbalanced doshas and not related to cleansing at all.
Yoga is a wonderful system in the right hands but in the hands of fanatics it can turn bad. Thats the sad story of AOL.

DECEMBER 17, 2009 AT 2:08 AM

Chapter 21.
Sri Sri Ravi Shankar's Guru Maharishi Mahesh Yogi's Traditional Philosophy of Meditation & Wisdom on Fast or Forceful Breathing Exercises



Maharishi Mahesh Yogi (1918–2008), one of the most influential spiritual teachers of the 20th century, and Guru of Sri Sri Ravi Shankar emphasized meditation that is rooted in **naturalness and effortless practice**. Unlike many traditional yogic paths that prescribe *prāṇāyāma*- deliberate breath control- as preparation for meditation, Maharishi viewed such techniques as potential obstacles to inner stillness. This perspective became central to **Transcendental Meditation (TM)**, which he described as *"a natural path to inner silence."* In *The Science of Being and Art of Living* (1963), Maharishi wrote: "The path of Transcendental Meditation is a natural path. It involves no control, no effort, no concentration, and no discipline of breath. The mind, left to itself, will naturally go to finer fields of thought and finally transcend thought." During meditation, as the mind settles through gentle repetition of a mantra, the breath naturally slows and refines- sometimes becoming almost imperceptible. Importantly, this refinement is **a natural result, not a technique**. Attempting to calm the mind through deliberate breath control reverses the natural order: the mind settles first, and the breath follows.

Transcendental Meditation versus Breath-Control Practices

Maharishi's key point is that TM is **not a breathing exercise**. It does not involve deliberate breath control or concentration on breathing. TM is a **natural and effortless process**, in which the mind experiences increasingly subtle states of thought, ultimately transcending thought and arriving at a state of **pure consciousness or restful alertness**.

He contrasted TM with methods involving regulation of breath, which he described as "active" or "forcing" the body or mind into a particular state. In TM, the mind settles inward spontaneously, with the body naturally following. Any deliberate control- including controlling the breath- prevents the mind from transcending.

" To force or control the breath is to keep attention at the surface. Transcendence comes not through more effort- but through letting go. The transcending process is most effective when there is no deliberate regulation of any physiological function, including breath."

- *Paraphrased from Maharishi Mahesh Yogi lectures and writings*

Maharishi associated deliberate breathing exercises with **physical or mental activity**, which is antithetical to the goal of TM. The physiological benefits of TM- deep rest, restful alertness, and nervous system coherence- arise naturally from the mind settling, not from breath manipulation.

The Problem with Effortful Breath Control

Traditional yoga practices often include techniques such as **Kapālabhāti** – forceful exhalations, **Bhastrikā** – rapid inhalation and exhalation, **Kumbhaka** – deliberate breath retention.

While these practices may serve purificatory or energizing purposes, Maharishi cautioned that they are **unsuitable for householders**, whose nervous systems are engaged by daily life. He wrote:

> "This state of breath has to be created in a very natural way, because any unnatural method will cause strain. This cannot be achieved by attempting to slow the breath, because slowing it will strain the process of breathing."
>
> - *Science of Being and Art of Living* (1963)

Effortful techniques can: Block the mind from transcending, Prevent restful alertness, Introduce strain and imbalance in the nervous system.

Maharishi discouraged hyperventilation, rapid breathing, or extended breath-holding. Instead, he recommended **Sukha pranayama**- gentle, comfortable breathing- for short periods, if at all. The mind-led, effortless approach of TM naturally refines the breath, reduces baseline respiration, and restores physiological balance.

Insights from the Bhagavad Gita

Maharishi explained that meditation trains the mind, which in turn conditions the nervous system. As the mind gains **Transcendental Consciousness**, the breath becomes soft and subtle. This creates **restful alertness** and a body "tuned to the divine nature" Meditation is primarily a **mental approach**, not a physical one. Attempting to control the body to influence consciousness is secondary; the mind leads, and the body naturally follows.

Sudarshan Kriya was Reportedly Disallowed in TM Organization

Maharishi is reported by many TM meditators to have explicitly disallowed the teaching of **Sudarshan Kriya**, breathing technique claimed to be cognized by Sri Sri Ravi Shankar. He prohibited its teaching within TM, describing allegedly according many sources within the TM as **"sugar-coated poison" or "sweet tasting poison".**

Maharishi Mahesh Yogi **did not approve of Sri Sri Ravi Shankar teaching the Sudarshan Kriya within the TM organization**, despite Ravi Shankar's requests to do so, according to accounts from several long-time TM practitioners, reliable sources, and official communications circulated within the TM organization after the separation. Maharishi reportedly **advised Ravi Shankar that the Sudarshan Kriya was intended for his personal practice only** and was **not suitable to be taught broadly or en masse**. By describing the practice as "sugar-coated poison," Maharishi may have hinted to emphasize that while Sudarshan Kriya may produce short-term bliss or pleasurable sensations, these effects could **mask potential long-term risks** to practitioners as is the case with fast breathing exercises which involve hyperventilation. He was particularly known to be concerned about the **impact on the nervous system**: the rapid, forceful breathing involved could destabilize individuals who were physically or emotionally vulnerable, potentially disrupting the body's natural equilibrium.

Maharishi did not endorse the practice, as he questioned both the authenticity of Sudarshan Kriya and its consistency with the classical yogic Holy Tradition upheld in Transcendental Meditation. Maharishi emphasized that genuine meditation should unfold gradually and naturally, rather than through forceful physiological techniques. Beyond philosophical concerns and his commitment to preserving the purity of his teaching, he also maintained that practices involving intense or accelerated breathing could disrupt true meditation. Such forceful methods, he warned, may strain the nervous system instead of supporting the effortless restfulness and inner silence that characterize **Transcendental Meditation.**

Historical accounts further contextualize the rift between Maharishi and Ravi Shankar. Sources such as Susan Shumsky's *Maharishi and Me* and reports in publications like *Scroll*-How Sri Sri Ravi Shankar Broke with Maharishi describe tensions that arose over the establishment of a Vedic school in Bengaluru.

This, combined with philosophical differences over teaching methods and the Sudarshan Kriya issue, contributed to Ravi Shankar's decision to branch out on his own and establish **THE ART OF LIVING FOUNDATION**. As a consequence, he was **considered separate from the TM organization** and was not authorized to teach TM practices under Maharishi's guidance.

Maharishi's critique was both philosophical- emphasizing that effort and control prevent transcendence- and practical, prioritizing **nervous system stability** and **authentic preparation for meditation**.

Maharishi's Wisdom & its Relevance in Today's Wellness Culture

Modern wellness trends often promote **rapid or intense breathing techniques**. While some people may benefit, many experience: Dizziness or hyperventilation, Panic, anxiety, or emotional overload and Disrupted autonomic balance. Maharishi's approach remains **gentle, sustainable, and scientifically grounded**, emphasizing natural breathing, nervous system coherence, and effortless transcendence.

"When the mind experiences subtle states of the object of meditation, it becomes very sharp and refined. At the same time, the breath becomes correspondingly refined, and this soft, fine breathing tends to return the nervous system to its normal functioning order… The body becomes a living instrument tuned to the divine nature."

- Maharishi Mahesh Yogi's Bhagavad-Gita commentary IV:38

Where many paths seek mastery through control, Maharishi pointed instead toward **surrender**. Where others pursue intensity, he emphasized the value of **stillness and rest**. In a world drawn to stimulation and effort, his message endures: return to the Self- not through force, but by allowing nature's own process of settling to unfold.

"Effortless transcendence occurs naturally;
forceful manipulation of the breath is unnecessary and counterproductive."

- Maharishi Mahesh Yogi

Following Maharishi's passing, some writers have noted the **complex relationship** between him and Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, who had once been associated with the Transcendental Meditation organization. Accounts suggest that their contact diminished after Ravi Shankar chose to establish an independent educational initiative in Bangalore- later **THE ART OF LIVING FOUNDATION**- rather than follow Maharishi's guidance to relocate the students to northern India. Regardless of the specifics, the episode illustrates a **divergence of approach**: Maharishi remained committed to the principle of **effortless transcendence**, while Ravi Shankar went on to emphasize **structured breathwork** as a distinct path.

Chapter 21.

Sri Sri Ravi Shankar's Caution against Sadhguru's Shambhavi Mudra Kriya's Harmful Adverse Effects

In recent years, Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, has publicly criticized certain breathing exercises and kriya practices taught by other spiritual leaders, most notably Isha Foundation's or Sadhguru Jaggi Vasudev's Shambhavi Mahamudra Kriya also popularly known and alternatively referred to as just Shambhavi Mudra. In a widely circulated video, he cautioned the public that some individuals had reportedly experienced psychological and mental health disturbances after practicing the technique. Sri Sri Ravi Shankar emphasized that advanced meditation practices taught by self-proclaimed gurus, without a verified lineage (guru-paramparā), could lead to unintended or harmful consequences. While his warnings did not include detailed studies or data, they were widely interpreted as a critique of Shambhavi Mahamudra Kriya and, by extension, a caution against unsupervised or unverified spiritual instruction given by self-proclaimed Gurus who do not come from an established tradition of spiritual masters or guru-paramparā.

r/SadhguruTruth • 7 mo. ago
Saitama777i
Approved Contributor
Sri Sri ravishankar on shambhavi mudra making you mentally unstable
RT
REAL TALK
In the above video Sri Sri Ravishankar says people come to art of living after becoming mentally ill after doing shambhavi mudra kriya. I got this video as a forward on whatsapp.
19
11
Share

Public Warnings vs. Internal Practices

The contrast between Sri Sri Ravi Shankar's public warnings about Shambhavi Mahamudra Kriya and the dissemination of Sudarshan Kriya, his own signature breathing technique, has drawn scrutiny. Sudarshan Kriya has been widely studied for its potential benefits in stress reduction, mood regulation, and overall well-being. However, independent researchers- including Dr. Richard Brown, and Dr. Patricia Gerbarg- have documented adverse effects in some participants, including anxiety, emotional instability, and physiological stress. Reports indicate that over 200 individuals have experienced adverse effects, with nearly 260 additional cases documented from online sources and compiled in this book, providing substantial evidence for reference and further assessment. Despite this, Sri Sri Ravi Shankar has not publicly cautioned the wider public about the potential risks associated with Sudarshan Kriya. Nor has he clarified how the technique is rooted in his own established yogic lineage or in the tradition of Transcendental Meditation, from which he is said to have emerged as a spiritual teacher or guru unlike his public statements critiquing other practices and the self-proclaimed gurus who teach them.

Questions of Lineage and Authorization

Sri Sri Ravi Shankar's only direct traditional connection is with the Shankaracharya Tradition of Jyotirmath, through which he was linked to Maharishi Mahesh Yogi. In that tradition, Maharishi served as the official authority and representative of the lineage, having been a disciple of the Shankaracharya of Jyotirmath, Swami Brahmananda Saraswati (also known as Gurudev), for thirteen years.

Sri Sri Ravi Shankar worked under Maharishi Mahesh Yogi in the TM organization as a Vedic pandit and was regarded as an emissary of Maharishi. He practiced advanced meditations and, possibly, the TM Siddhi Sutras. He was attired like a TM siddha, wearing white clothing, and is said to have discovered or cognized the Sudarshan Kriya during a ten-day period of silence and meditation-reports suggest this coincided with a Vipassana meditation retreat. According to some accounts, the founder of the Vipassana organization, Shri SN Goenka, recalled that Sri Sri Ravi Shankar had been a student in Vipassana programs at the time and was not yet recognized as a guru. Later, he founded **THE ART OF LIVING** organization, offering dharma teachings and programs in a commercialized format-a practice Goenka reportedly viewed as ethically questionable.

However, when it came to teaching Sudarshan Kriya publicly, Sri Sri did not obtain Maharishi's permission. Instead, he left the Transcendental Meditation organization and established **THE ART OF LIVING FOUNDATION** independently.

This history underscores a key point: although Sri Sri Ravi Shankar sometimes criticizes other teachers for offering practices outside established lineages, his own widely taught technique-Sudarshan Kriya-was introduced without formal authorization from the lineage he references. This raises important questions about transparency and accountability in presenting both the benefits and potential risks of the practice.

For instance, he has publicly criticized Sadhguru Jaggi Vasudev for lacking an established lineage or authentic traditional origin-yet, his own widely taught technique, Sudarshan Kriya, was introduced without formal authorization from the Maharishi Mahesh Yogi or TM Organization that officially represent his formal link to the very lineage or guru- paramparā he claims, and is widely promoted, to represent. This contrast highlights a clear concern: while he questions the legitimacy of others, his own practices share a similar lack of documented lineage, raising questions about consistency, transparency, and accountability.

Implications for Practitioners

This episode highlights a broader concern in the modern wellness and meditation landscape: spiritual and breathing practices, no matter how widely promoted, carry both potential benefits and inherent risks. Practitioners are urged to approach advanced techniques with discernment, proper guidance, and an awareness of their own physical and emotional limits. A balanced perspective underscores that consistency and transparency are essential when evaluating the safety of such practices.

Warning the public about the risks of breathing exercises and meditation techniques by other spiritual leaders while downplaying or underreporting the risks of one's own practices can cause confusion, erode trust, and put practitioners at unnecessary risk. Sri Sri Ravi Shankar's critique of Shambhavi Mahamudra Kriya highlights debates around lineage, authorization, and the disclosure of potential risks in spiritual traditions. Yet, while he publicly questions others for lacking an established or authorized lineage, he does not provide documented proof that Sudarshan Kriya was formally authorized within the lineage he references. Nowhere-neither on any official website nor in his books-does Sri Sri Ravi Shankar explicitly name Maharishi Mahesh Yogi as his Guru, although his connection is widely known. In fact, in a recorded interview, when asked if Maharishi was his Guru, he stated that he had visited Maharishi, Ma Anandamayi, and other saints of that era, but that his Guru from childhood has always been Pandit Sudhakar Chaturvedi. This gap between his public criticisms and the teaching of his own technique raises important questions about accountability, transparency, and consistency.

This serves as a reminder that spiritual teachers, while offering guidance, also bear the responsibility of transparent communication regarding potential risks, the origins of their methods, adherence to traditional safeguards, and a willingness to openly address critical questions about their techniques.

Chapter 22. Considerations for Practicing Sudarshan Kriya Yoga during Grief: Why Some Seekers Face Greater Risks

Grief often brings people to spiritual practices, including Sudarshan Kriya Yoga (SKY). But grief is not a simple emotional state. It can mask layers of trauma, latent psychiatric conditions, and physiological fragility that significantly alter how a person's nervous system responds to intense breathwork.

THE ART OF LIVING FOUNDATION routinely markets SKY as a "universal cure for depression," implying that depression is a single, uniform disorder. But depression is not one condition; it is an umbrella category encompassing dozens of subtypes, each with different biological, psychological, and trauma-driven origins. Many of these require careful clinical supervision - not unmonitored hyperventilation-based practices.

This section explains **why people in grief often belong to high-risk groups**, and why SKY's intense, physiologically provocative method can worsen their condition rather than heal it.

Most of these vulnerabilities are **invisible**, even to the individual experiencing them. They are almost never screened for in THE ART OF LIVING courses.

Complex Grief and Complex PTSD

Not all grief is ordinary bereavement. For many, grief overlays a pre-existing trauma history that was never resolved. Such individuals may experience **Complex Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (C-PTSD)** without realizing it. Common trauma contexts include:

- childhood emotional neglect
- abusive or chaotic family environments
- loss through unforeseen sudden events or violence or accidents
- witnessing drawn-out medical suffering
- multiple losses over short periods
- relationship trauma or abandonment

In these people, grief becomes fused with:

- chronic hypervigilance
- emotional overwhelm
- unstable sense of self
- dissociation
- exaggerated physiological responses

Why SKY can be potentially risky under such conditions: Intense breathing replicates trauma physiology:

- rapid heartbeat
- tight chest
- dizziness
- tingling
- derealization

To the trauma-conditioned nervous system, these are not neutral sensations - they are identical to the physiological signals present during the original traumatic events. This can **reactivate traumatic memories**, producing:

- flashbacks, shaking or crying spells
- emotional flooding, dissociation or collapse of emotional regulation

What appears to instructors as "energy release" is often **a trauma activation**, not a healing process.

Grief, Survivor's Guilt, and Suicidality

Grief can sometimes carry **intense guilt**, especially when a person believes:

- "I should have prevented the death."
- "I don't deserve to be alive."
- "It should have been me."

This can produce:

- intrusive self-blaming thoughts
- hopelessness
- withdrawal
- ambivalence about living
- passive or active suicidal ideation

These states are **highly unstable**.

Why SKY can be potentially risky under such conditions: Hyperventilation causes:

- chest tightness
- dizziness
- fear of losing control
- cognitive disorientation
- a sense of bodily threat

For someone already struggling with guilt or despair, these sensations can precipitate an acute crisis:

- panic combined with self-destructive thoughts
- emotional breakdowns
- catastrophic interpretations ("I am dying," "I want this to stop forever")
- impulsive suicidal urges

Breathwork-induced physiological stress does not relieve suicidal thinking; it often magnifies it. This is why **suicidality is a medical contraindication** for any hyperventilation-based technique.

Postpartum Vulnerability: A Physiological High-Risk Window

The postpartum environment involves:

- dramatic hormonal shifts (estrogen, progesterone, cortisol)
- sleep deprivation
- breastfeeding metabolic demands
- emotional intensity
- increased anxiety sensitivity

Postpartum women are already at increased risk for:

- postpartum depression
- postpartum anxiety
- postpartum OCD
- postpartum psychosis

Many women do not recognize early postpartum mood symptoms; they often interpret them as "normal exhaustion," which delays diagnosis.

Why SKY can be potentially risky under such conditions: SKY introduces physiological stressors - hyperventilation, CO_2 depletion, autonomic swings - that the postpartum system cannot buffer effectively. The result can be:

- worsening anxiety
- panic attacks
- sudden emotional crashes
- intrusive thoughts about harm
- derealization
- agitation or insomnia
- destabilization of postpartum depression and triggering of postpartum psychosis

Postpartum psychosis is a **medical emergency** with a high risk of suicide or infanticide. Hyperventilation practices can accelerate its onset.

Undiagnosed Bipolar Disorder: A Major, Often Missed Contraindication

Bipolar disorder frequently remains unrecognized for years because:

- hypomania feels pleasurable, productive, or spiritual
- depression is mistaken for “grief,” “burnout,” or “emotional sensitivity”
- cultural norms discourage psychiatric evaluation
- spiritual communities may misinterpret symptoms as “kundalini awakening” or “inner expansion”

Why SKY can be potentially risky under such conditions: SKY’s physiological effects push the nervous system toward activation:

- adrenaline release
- rapid breathing
- emotional arousal
- increased dopamine
- reduced inhibition

These effects **mimic the early stages of hypomania**, with:

- elevated energy/making big plans
- reduced sleep
- pressured speech

- impulsivity/irritability

Repeated intense sessions - especially the longer weekly follow-ups - can flip hypomania into:

- **full mania**
- psychosis
- dangerous behaviour
- hospitalization

People often do not know they have bipolar disorder until a spiritual practice triggers the first manic episode.

Undiagnosed Schizophrenia or Schizoaffective Disorder

The early stages of psychotic disorders are subtle, often overlooked, and commonly spiritualized.

Prodromal symptoms include:

- mild paranoia
- odd beliefs
- unusual sensory experiences
- social withdrawal
- mild derealization
- anxiety without explanation

These individuals frequently turn to meditation or breathwork seeking relief.

Why SKY can be potentially risky under such conditions: The physiological effects of hyperventilation - sensory distortions, tingling, auditory sensitivity, derealization - can be misinterpreted by a vulnerable mind as:

- messages
- signs
- voices
- revelations
- warnings
- energetic breakthroughs

At the same time, CO_2 reduction decreases prefrontal cortical control, increasing: disorganized thinking, delusional interpretations, paranoid mistrust, hallucinations. This can accelerate the onset of psychosis or trigger an acute psychotic break.

Why Weekly Long Sudarshan Kriya Follow Ups Magnify All These Risks

The weekly offline follow-up sessions involve:

- longer breathing cycles
- deeper and faster patterns
- extended retention periods
- heightened sensory overload
- group intensity
- reduced individual monitoring

This amplifies:

- CO_2 depletion
- sympathetic activation
- emotional arousal
- perceptual distortion
- dissociative tendencies

For a person with **any hidden vulnerability**, these sessions can lead to:

- panic attacks, severe anxiety
- uncontrollable crying
- depersonalization
- mania
- psychosis
- suicidal crisis
- emergency hospitalization due to:
    - difficulty breathing, loss of consciousness
    - sudden palpitations, chest discomfort or pain with vomiting
    - sudden confusion and dizziness, hypertensive crisis (unusual spike in blood pressure)
    - in very rare cases heart attack or stroke where there already is a cardiovascular vulnerable health condition present in the practitioner

These events have been reported in various blogs and are sometimes misinterpreted by instructors as:

- “karmic cleansing”
- “healing crisis”
- “energy shifting”

But from a medical perspective, these can be very well signs of acute nervous system destabilization.

Why This Matters: Ethical and Clinical Responsibility

Most individuals approach Sudarshan Kriya Yoga (SKY) not from a place of stability, but from a state of suffering. They may be experiencing grief, emotional distress, or seeking relief from psychological or physiological challenges. Such conditions render them vulnerable, though not inherently weak. Trauma-informed yoga instructors and mental health professionals recognize that these vulnerable states require carefully adapted practices, thorough screening, and the maintenance of psychological safety.

Yet **THE ART OF LIVING FOUNDATION** routinely:

- markets SKY as universally safe
- claims it cures all forms of depression
- offers no screening
- gives no trauma-informed alternatives
- reframes distress as “detox”
- downplays adverse effects
- encourages vulnerable people to intensify practice when they deteriorate

This is the opposite of trauma-informed care.

Instead, a compassionate spiritual path acknowledges:

- the complexity of human grief
- the diversity of depressive disorders
- the real risks of physiological overstimulation
- the importance of safety over doctrine

Individuals in distress deserve practices that meet them where they are—not techniques that risk overwhelming their nervous systems or worsen their existing or underlying medical health conditions.

Chapter 23.

Not to Scare, But to Caution

Practices that combine rapid breathing with prolonged breath retention-such as specific pranayama techniques (e.g., Bhastrika or Kapalbhati followed by Kumbhak) or Sudarshan Kriya-can significantly increase the risk of both hypocapnia (low CO_2) and hypoxia (low oxygen). These altered blood gas states can lead to vascular stress, causing blood vessels in the brain and heart to constrict, which may reduce blood flow and oxygen delivery. Over time, this can contribute to serious neurological problems such as dizziness, fainting, memory impairment, or even trigger seizures in susceptible individuals. From a cardiovascular perspective, the changes in blood gases can provoke arrhythmias (irregular heartbeats), increase the risk of heart attacks, or exacerbate existing hypertension. In rare but severe cases, repetitive vascular stress may promote the formation or rupture of cerebral aneurysms, potentially resulting in life-threatening haemorrhagic strokes. Additionally, these physiological disturbances can worsen psychiatric symptoms like anxiety or panic attacks, particularly in individuals with pre-existing mental health conditions.

THE ART OF LIVING FOUNDATION, which reports millions of followers globally and promotes Sudarshan Kriya as a completely safe and side-effects-free science-backed path to mental and emotional well-being, but has not issued a public response to Vadakayil's specific allegations. The practice is endorsed by several health and wellness professionals worldwide, though it also remains the subject of ongoing scientific study. Although Captain Vadakayil's critiques are contentious and widely debated, they highlight an increasing concern about the safety and oversight of intensive breathwork practices-particularly when conducted outside medically supervised or controlled environments. According to **THE ART OF LIVING FOUNDATION**'s website, Sudarshan Kriya (SKY) has benefited thousands-and even millions-of people worldwide, with reported improvements in mental clarity, emotional well-being, and overall health. For many, especially healthy individuals, the intense breathwork involved in Sudarshan Kriya may be suitable and even transformative. However, there is also a sizeable number of individuals who have reported experiences that contradict the benefits widely promoted by **THE ART OF LIVING FOUNDATION**. Former teachers, independent researchers, and various online blogs have documented adverse effects experienced by over 200 individuals, including psychological distress, anxiety, and other complications. The challenge is that these negative experiences are scattered and not compiled in a central, accessible repository, making it difficult for the public or researchers to study them in detail or assess potential risks comprehensively. Furthermore, the organization has a large and devoted following, many of whom regard its founder, Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, as a divine or enlightened figure whose words and

teachings are considered beyond reproach. This reverence can sometimes discourage open discussion or critical inquiry. Ironically, Sri Sri Ravi Shankar himself has stated on multiple occasions that people should feel free to question him boldly-though not cynically-and that his teachings should only be accepted if they align with one's own logic, understanding and experience. Despite this, there are no public forums or organized discussions during group satsangs or events where adverse experiences with the practices are openly recognized, acknowledged explored, or resolved. As a result, those who may be experiencing similar negative symptoms often remain unaware, without the information or support needed to make informed decisions about their participation. Fast or forceful breathing exercises such as those practiced in the Sudarshan Kriya Yoga are **powerful but potentially dangerous** if performed without control or suitable modifications in presence of health conditions that are genetically inherent, present but undetected or develop over time. Both classical Yoga texts and Ayurveda in addition to Modern Science and Medical Guidance, emphasize **caution, guidance, and attention to individual constitution (doshas)**. Excessive practice can disturb the nervous, respiratory, and digestive systems, while moderate, well-guided practice strengthens health, mental clarity, and vitality.

Given that many people have reported symptoms and outcomes consistent with these possible explanations of physiological and psychological adverse effects, it is highly likely that those who suffered adverse effects and harmful reactions were either not properly screened beforehand or developed underlying health conditions that increased their risk.

These conditions would have required suitable modifications or avoidance of certain practices within Sudarshan Kriya. Unfortunately, because these health risks were not identified or disclosed, proper adjustments were never made, exposing practitioners to avoidable harm. Moreover, health risks and necessary precautions for Sudarshan Kriya are nowhere publicly disclosed-in course materials, handouts, manuals, websites or instructions during training or follow-ups, nor in online videos or audio guided practices such as those on YouTube or **THE ART OF LIVING FOUNDATION** mobile app.

This book is not written to alarm but to empower. Sudarshan Kriya Yoga is a potent psychophysiological practice. When taught responsibly-with clear contraindications, honest communication, and ethical screening-it can serve many people well. But without these safeguards, vulnerable practitioners may misinterpret warning signs or be encouraged to "push through" discomfort that is actually a signal of distress.

Remember and Share to Caution others

Breathing exercises involving fast or rapid breathing, breath holding, or forceful breathing- such as Sudarshan Kriya Yoga, Kapalbhati, Bhastrika among others-can be beneficial or harmful depending on the health profile of the people practicing them.

Proper medical screening, professional supervision, and moderation are essential to ensure that individuals with underlying health conditions or risk factors do not engage in these practices in ways that could cause harm, worsen existing physical or mental health issues, or result in serious consequences, including illness, injury, or near-fatal adverse effects.

Should spiritual practices be immune to critique simply because they are ancient?
Or does the very sacredness of these techniques demand even higher standards of clarity, accountability, and safety?

For now, the conversation remains open- and perhaps it should be.

As practitioners, teachers, skeptics, and seekers move forward, the hope is not for silence, but for sincere dialogue where breathing exercises, like truth,
are taught to flow freely and safely.

Consider sharing this wisdom to benefit others and bring wellbeing to all

namaskaram

Nandita Jayaram said...

"I don't question the benefits of the breathing exercises, which, correctly practiced can be positive."

The breathing exercises especially the sudarshan kriya as taught in AOL are not always beneficial. In many cases it has resulted in serious damage both physically and psychologically. When such bad effects are reported, AOL teachers are taught to teach some minor variations in these kriyas or they tell people to focus more on silent sitting meditation. Most importantly they supress any bad news on the ill effects of the Kriya.
Some people whose body constituion can take rapid breathing exercises continue and get benefitted. A very famous Ayurvedic doctor and Yoga expert from Pune told me that SK and other similar pranayamas can aggravate the doshas in certain body constitutions and such people should be contraindicated to practise that. When my husband (an AOL teacher then) was taking a course he came across a person who reacted very strongly to SK. When this was told to Sri Sri in a small gathering in a room Sri Sri replied that - 'Kriya is good if you are good'. Meaning nothing wrong with the technique as it is inspired and divine and something is wrong with you. Luckily this person realized that SK is not for him and he picked up some other practises from another yoga system and last I met him he was brimming with energy and joy.
One size obviously doesnt fit all and it can be harmful in many cases. Most sincere Yoga teachers know this and they have different set of practices to suit differing needs. In my experience as an AOL teacher majority of the people (I would say around 90%) who take the course drop out of practising the breathing exercises in just a few days. A few continue to their own peril. Many people inspite of not practising the breathing exercises still participate in the satsangs and get the social bonding and belongingness in AOL circles.
I know of many AOL teachers who do not practise Sudarshan Kriya and they do the other traditional pranayamas, asanas and exercises like surya namaskara. But they still do teach Sudharshan Kriya. They still hype and sell the practices which they dont themselves practise.

REFERENCES

1. Divya K, Bharathi S, Somya R, et al. Sudarshan Kriya Yoga Breathing and a Meditation Program for Physician Burnout: A Randomized Clinical Trial. *JAMA Network Open*. 2024;7(1):e245678.
2. Sudarshan Kriya Yoga and its Effects on Sleep: A Systematic Review. *Annals of Medicine and Surgery*. 2024; LWW.
3. Evaluation of a Sudarshan Kriya Yoga (SKY) based breath intervention program for patients with depression and anxiety. *Indian J Psychiatry*. 2021;63(2):153-160.
4. Doshi R, et al. The Effects of Sudarshan Kriya (SKY) on Physical & Mental Health: A Systematic Review. *International Journal of Pharmaceutical and Clinical Research*. 2023;15(10):1205-1217.
5. Sharma M, et al. Safety and adverse events of yoga: A systematic review. *Complementary Therapies in Medicine*. 2020;52:102491.
6. Sudarshan kriya yoga: Breathing for health. *PubMed Central*.
7. Effects of Sudarshan Kriya Yoga (SKY) on the stress and anxiety of medical students: A study in Italy. *Annals of Medicine and Surgery*. 2024.
8. Brown, R.P., & Gerbarg, P.L. Sudarshan Kriya Yogic breathing in the treatment of stress, anxiety, and depression: Part II-clinical applications and guidelines. *Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine*. 2005;11(4):711-717.
9. Streeter, C.C., Gerbarg, P.L., Saper, R.B., Ciraulo, D.A., Brown, R.P. Effects of yoga on the autonomic nervous system, gamma-aminobutyric-acid, and allostasis in epilepsy, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder. *Medical Hypotheses*. 2012;78(5):571-579.
10. Light on Pranayama: The Yogic Art of Breathing" by B.K.S. Iyengar
11. The Science of Pranayama by Swami Sivananda
12. Prana and Pranayama by Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati
13. Asana Pranayama Mudra Bandha" by Swami Satyananda Saraswati
14. Hatha Yoga Pradipika (with commentary by Swami Muktibodhananda)
15. "Yoga and Kriya" – Swami Satyananda Saraswati
16. Negative effects of Sudarshan Kriya! Posted on December 23, 2010 by Ach. Agyaatadarshan Anand Nath https://agyaatdarshan.wordpress.com/2010/12/23/negative-effects-of-sudarshan-kriya/
17. My Experience Of Doing Sudarshan Kriya Of Sri Sri Ravishankar/Art Of Living Organisation by Parth Choksi in experience, realizations. October 31, 2010 http://web.archive.org/web/20250216183414/https://parthchoksi.com/life/experience/my-experience-of-doing-sudarshan-kriya-of-sri-sri-ravishankarart-of-living-organisation/
18. Reddit r\Ex_Artofliving
19. Sadhguru's advice on not practicing unsafe or unsuitable breathing exercises https://isha.sadhguru.org/en/wisdom/article/dont-school-breath
20. https://worldyogaforum.com/pranayama/#precautions-while-doing-pranayama
21. https://www.newtownbee.com/08172015/newtown-yoga-festival-headliners-encourage-back-to-balance/
22. The Physio-Kundalini Syndrome And Mental Illness Bruce Greyson Farmington. Connecticut https://med.virginia.edu/perceptual-studies/wp-content/uploads/sites/360/2016/12/OTH16-Greyson.pdf
23. American Journal of Respiratory and Critical Care Medicine
24. Journal of Applied Physiology

25. Science of Being and the Art of Living, Maharishi Mahesh Yogi
26. Hyperventilation, CO_2 physiology, cerebral blood flow , Gardner, W. N. "The pathophysiology of hyperventilation disorders." *Chest* 109.2 (1996): 516–534.
27. Banzett, R. B., et al. “Chemoreception and respiratory drive.” *Physiology* (2001).
28. Respiratory alkalosis & neuromuscular symptoms, Swenson, E. R. "Respiratory alkalosis and its effects." *Respiratory Care* 55.5 (2010): 660–671.
29. Hyperventilation and panic disorder, Klein, D. F. "False suffocation alarm theory of panic disorder." *Archives of General Psychiatry* (1993).
30. Meuret, A. E., et al. "Hyperventilation in panic disorder." *Biological Psychiatry* (2012).
31. Autonomic dysregulation, Thayer, J. F., et al. “A neurovisceral integration model of autonomic regulation.” *Biological Psychology* (2009).
32. CO_2 and dissociation, Simeon, D., et al. “Depersonalization and CO_2 rebreathing.” *American Journal of Psychiatry* (2001).
33. Hyperventilation-induced seizures, Lum, L. C. "Hyperventilation: the tip and the iceberg." *Journal of Psychosomatic Research* (1975).
34. Holmes, G. L. "Hyperventilation and epileptiform activity." *Epilepsia* (1985).
35. Breathwork and psychiatric risks, Grof, S. “LSD Psychotherapy” (on hyperventilation-induced experiences).
36. Porges, S. W. “Polyvagal Theory.”
37. Hormonal & metabolic effects, Sapolsky, R. M. *Why Zebras Don't Get Ulcers* (stress and HPA axis).

APPENDIX A
Safe Practice Guidelines

Sudarshan Kriya Yoga (SKY) is an intense breathwork practice that places significant physiological demands on the cardiovascular, respiratory, neurological, and psychological systems. Safe practice requires awareness, screening, and timely response to symptoms.

When it comes to **mass-practiced rhythmic, fast or forceful breathing methods**-such as Sudarshan Kriya Yoga-caution is particularly warranted. Critics have pointed out that the widespread use of rapid breathing practices often induces temporary highs or emotional catharsis, especially when combined with a set of breathing exercises involving holding or suspension of breath, but these effects are largely the result of hyperventilation and change in the blood pH levels, rather than genuine inner transformation. While such methods may provide a fleeting sense of release, long-term dependence on them can create psychological instability or emotional reliance on external stimulation instead of cultivating true balance and awareness.

Improper or unmoderated use of fast or rapid breathing techniques and breathing exercises involving breath holding and suspension can create serious disturbances, including imbalances in the nervous system, emotional instability, and even hallucinations or altered mental states that do not signify real spiritual growth. Moreover, without aligning one's lifestyle, diet, energy system, and intention, such practices can amplify unresolved issues rather than dissolve them.

To approach yogic breathwork safely and effectively, many experienced teachers recommend the following guidelines:

1. Breathe naturally unless guided by a qualified and well-trained teacher.
2. Practice only those yogic breathing techniques that have been personally and appropriately taught to you, with consideration for your individual needs or health conditions.
3. Refrain from mixing techniques from different traditions or Gurus.
4. Avoid imitating monastic or ascetic practices unless you are fully committed to that path, as such methods are intended for detachment rather than active participation in daily life.
5. Practice advanced breathwork-such as breath holding, suspension, or rapid breathing-only under the guidance of a highly trained and experienced yoga teacher.
6. Such a teacher should be well-rounded, knowledgeable in traditional asanas, pranayamas, and kriyas, and capable of offering a time-tested system that emphasizes safety.

The approach should provide space for open feedback, personal adjustments, and genuine access to competent guidance, rather than relying on isolated techniques, quick fixes, or secretive methods with no proper forum to address even the simplest or most critical doubts.

This chapter provides a comprehensive safety framework that practitioners and instructors can use to modify or discontinue the practice when needed.

1. Recognize Early Warning Signs

Stop the practice immediately if any of the following occur:

- Chest tightness or discomfort
- Tingling or numbness in hands or feet
- Visual dimming, dizziness, or unsteady vision
- Heart palpitations or a sudden rise in blood pressure
- Strong emotional overwhelm
- Faintness, confusion, or loss of balance

These are not spiritual purification experiences. They are physiological warning signs that require attention.

2. Seek Immediate Help If Symptoms Escalate

Call for medical assistance if someone:

- Loses consciousness
- Has severe chest pain or chest pressure
- Has vomiting with cardiovascular symptoms
- Experiences uncontrollable shaking or spasms
- Shows signs of acute panic or suicidality

These are **clinical emergencies**, not energetic “cleansing.”

3. Never Force the Breath

Traditional yogic texts consistently warn against aggressive pranayama without preparation. Breath should remain **comfortable, natural, and non-straining** at all times.

4. Know Your Limits

If you have a medical condition, psychiatric history, or unexplained symptoms, consult a doctor experienced in respiratory physiology before engaging in advanced breathwork.

5. Monthly (or Bi-Weekly) Self-Check Symptoms Review

Use the following Quick Self-Check Symptoms List every month-or every two weeks-to evaluate whether you may be experiencing symptoms of possible adverse effects or early signs of an underlying health condition that may require you to modify, reduce, or avoid the SKY practice. This checklist provides practical, evidence-informed guidance to help practitioners and instructors approach SKY with greater clarity and safety. Many of the symptoms listed may reflect hyperventilation-induced hypocapnia, reduced cerebral blood flow, autonomic nervous system dysregulation, or cardiopulmonary strain.

Both instructors and practitioners can use this tool to identify potential adverse effects, some of which may indicate underlying medical or psychiatric conditions requiring further evaluation. Additionally, this list serves as a symptom- or incident-based screening tool to identify participants who may already have an undetected vulnerability, pre-existing condition, or physiological susceptibility. Such individuals may face a higher risk of contraindications or adverse effects unless the practice is modified appropriately or avoided altogether.

Quick Self-Check Symptoms List

Instructions for Use

If you, someone you instruct, or someone you know practices SKY, review whether any of the following symptoms have occurred at any time:

- before, during, or immediately after SKY practice session
- hours, days, weeks, months, or even years after practice

Also note if any of these symptoms existed before learning SKY as that could indicate a pre-existing health condition.

Cardiovascular Symptoms

☐ Skipped beats / irregular heartbeat
☐ Rapid heart rate
☐ Chest tightness
☐ **Chest pain** *(red flag)*
☐ Sudden rise in blood pressure
☐ **Severe headache** *(possible hypertensive crisis)*
☐ Dizziness/Light-headedness
☐ **Fainting / near-fainting** *(red flag)*
☐ **Shortness of breath at rest** *(red flag)*
☐ Feeling heart is “fluttering”
☐ **Palpitations (with or without dizziness, chest discomfort/pain, rapid pulse, nausea/vomiting)** *(red flag)*

Respiratory Symptoms

- ☐ Breathlessness
- ☐ **Sudden air hunger** *(red flag)*
- ☐ Wheezing
- ☐ Chest constriction
- ☐ Inability to complete breath cycles
- ☐ **Sudden choking sensation** *(red flag)*

Neurological Symptoms

- ☐ Tingling / pins-and-needles
- ☐ Numbness
- ☐ Tremors
- ☐ Weakness
- ☐ Migraine/ Visual flashes / aura
- ☐ Mental **Confusion** *(red flag)*
- ☐ Foggy thinking
- ☐ **Derealization (feeling unreal)** *(if intense or sudden, treat as red flag)*
- ☐ **Loss of balance or inability to stand** *(red flag)*

Psychological / Emotional Symptoms

- ☐ Panic
- ☐ **Sudden fear or terror (panic onset) (red flag)**
- ☐ Racing thoughts
- ☐ Emotional overwhelm
- ☐ Trauma flashbacks
- ☐ Crying outbursts
- ☐ Intrusive thoughts
- ☐ Increased compulsive urges (OCD)
- ☐ **Feeling "I am losing control" (red flag)**
- ☐ Hearing voices (red flag)
- ☐ **Seeing things that are not there (visual distortions or hallucinations) (red flag)**
- ☐ **Feeling watched or monitored (red flag)**
- ☐ **Feeling controlled, influenced, or externally directed (red flag)**
- ☐ **Severe derealization / depersonalization with fear (red flag)**

➢ **If you tick 3 or more symptoms:**

Modify the practice immediately.
Possible modifications include:

- Avoid Bhastrika or perform it very gently without using forceful breath or jerky hand movements
- Avoid breath-holding during Three-Stage Pranayama
- Skip Bandhas
- Avoid fast or rapid Sudarshan Kriya cycles
- Replace the fast cycles with **medium-paced cycles**

➢ **If you tick ANY red-flag symptoms:**

STOP the practice and seek medical evaluation immediately.

➢ **If you tick ANY red-flag symptoms:**

STOP the practice and seek medical evaluation.

Chapter 23. Safer Alternatives to Daily Breathwork and Meditation Practices

Daily breathwork and meditation can be deeply supportive when approached with practices that respect the body's natural rhythms and individual limitations. While Sudarshan Kriya Yoga provides benefits for many, it is not universally suitable-particularly for individuals with contraindications, underlying health conditions, or sensitivity to fast or forceful breathing techniques. Therefore, it is important to know the **safer, gentler alternatives** that deliver comparable benefits without placing undue physiological strain on the cardiovascular, respiratory, neurological, or psychological systems. These practices offer a more stable, accessible path for those seeking the healing and restorative effects of breathwork and meditation.

For many individuals, gentler practices provide equal benefit with less risk. The following practices taught by **THE ART OF LIVING FOUNDATION** are generally safe for everyone as they don't involve any forceful or fast breathing or breath retention and holding. These may be more appropriate for vulnerable individuals who have contraindications or experience distress after practicing Sudarshan Kriya Yoga.

1. Three Stage Pranayam with Ujjayi breathing (practiced without retention or breath holding)
2. Alternate Nostril Breathing or Nadi Shodhan (practiced without breath-holding)
3. Sahaj Samadhi Meditation
4. Pancha Kosha Guided Meditation
5. Om Namah Shivaya Pranayama
6. Ram Dhyan Meditation
7. Yoga Nidra
8. Gentler Version of Sudarshan Kriya (i.e. skipping breath-holding, Bhastrika & fast or rapid cycles)
9. Yoga Nidra

The following practices not taught by **THE ART OF LIVING FOUNDATION** but are generally safe for everyone as they don't involve any forceful or fast breathing or breath retention and holding.

1. Gentle Version of Short Sudarshan Kriya Breathing Exercise (involves no medium, fast or rapid breathing)
    - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JKNzaWGm0o8

2. Simple Soham Breathing Exercise without Chakra Meditation by Vasant Lad
    - Learn how to do So Hum Mantra with Dr. Vasant Lad - Ep: 1 - YouTube

3. Isha Kriya by Sadhguru Jagadish Vasudev available on Miracle of Mind app and YouTube
    - https://isha.sadhguru.org/us/en/miracle-of-mind

The aforementioned kriya practices do not involve fast or rapid breathing and neither do they involve breath holding and are hence much more safer and suitable for teaching en-masse.

However, it is still advisable to learn them under the proper guidance of a substantially trained teacher who has demonstrated knowledge and experience in guiding people with trauma and contraindications informed instructions. Choosing gentler practices does not diminish the depth of one's yogic journey-it often enhances it by promoting **greater safety, consistency, and long-term sustainability**. Breathwork should never overwhelm the body or destabilize the mind; its purpose is to harmonize, not challenge, the nervous system. By selecting techniques appropriate to one's health profile and learning them from instructors trained in trauma awareness and contraindication-sensitive guidance, practitioners can cultivate wellbeing without risk. Ultimately, the heart of yoga lies not in intensity, but in **awareness, balance, and compassionate self-regulation**. These safer alternatives allow individuals to continue benefiting from yogic practices in a way that honours both their physiology and their inner experience.

APPENDIX B
Prioritizing Contraindication Screening

Safe and responsible instruction requires more than enthusiasm or technical skill-it demands careful screening, continuous vigilance, and the willingness to modify or stop practices when students show signs of risk. Breathwork-based practices can place significant physiological stress on the cardiovascular, neurological, and psychological systems. For some individuals, these practices may trigger harmful effects rather than therapeutic ones.

To protect students, **contraindication screening must be a mandatory, non-negotiable part of teaching**.

Responsible instruction includes:

- Asking about health history and verifying information with most recent medical information as well as past record or historical medical information or treatments undergone where significant
- Encouraging honesty without fear, shame, or stigma
- Allowing students to decline or modify any practice at any time
- Never dismissing symptoms as "resistance," "karma," or "spiritual cleansing"
- Modifying or stopping the session whenever warning signs appear

Compassion and empathy-not intensity or aggressive marketing or advertising to get more enrolments-must guide instruction. Consistency-not improvisation-must guide safety.

Use the following **Contraindications Checklist** to ensure all courses, teachers, and sessions maintain the same standard of care.

Contraindications Checklist

1. Cardiovascular Diagnoses

☐ Hypertension (high blood pressure)
☐ Fluctuating or unstable blood pressure
☐ Coronary artery disease
☐ Angina or chest pain
☐ Arrhythmias / palpitations / irregular heartbeat
☐ Cardiomyopathy or structural heart disease
☐ Heart valve disorders
☐ History of heart attack (MI)
☐ History of stroke or TIA
☐ High coronary calcium score
☐ Carotid artery stenosis or plaque

Why this matters: Hyperventilation → vasoconstriction + blood pressure spikes

- Breath retention → acute pressure surges
- Combined risk → ischemia, arrhythmia, stroke, hypertensive crisis

Required Modifications:

- Avoid **Bhastrika**
- Avoid **fast Sudarshan Kriya cycles**; use only medium cycles
- Avoid **all breath-holding** during Three-Stage Pranayama; skip all Bandhas
- Avoid **Offline Weekly Long Kriya Follow-Up**

2. Respiratory & Lung Diagnoses

☐ Asthma
☐ Exercise-induced bronchospasm
☐ COPD or chronic bronchitis
☐ Chronic cough or wheezing
☐ Emphysema
☐ Lung fibrosis / pulmonary fibrosis
☐ Recent chest infection

Why this matters: Fast breathing and retentions may trigger:

- Bronchospasm
- Air trapping
- Breathlessness
- CO_2 imbalance

Required Modifications:

- Avoid Bhastrika, or perform gently without force
- Avoid fast or short cycles; medium cycles only if tolerated
- Avoid all breath-holding during Three-Stage Pranayama (or reduce holding time)
- Skip Bandhas
- For lung fibrosis: use gentle, slow, low-volume breathing only
- Stop immediately if breathlessness or air hunger occurs

3. Neurological Diagnoses

☐ Epilepsy or seizure disorders
☐ Migraine with aura
☐ Cluster headaches
☐ History of fainting or syncope
☐ Balance disorders
☐ Traumatic brain injury (TBI) history
☐ Neuropathy or nerve disorders

Why this matters: Hypocapnia (low CO_2) → reduced cerebral blood flow →

- Migraine triggers
- Dizziness
- Fainting
- Seizure-like events

Required Modifications:

- Avoid Bhastrika
- Avoid all fast cycles (medium cycles only if student is fully stable and symptom-free)
- Avoid breath-holding during Three-Stage Pranayama
- Skip Bandhas
- If dizziness or tingling occurs → **stop immediately**
- Prefer guided, slow breathing or alternate-day practice

4. Psychiatric / Mental Health Diagnoses

Strong Contraindications

☐ Panic disorder
☐ PTSD or trauma-related disorders
☐ OCD
☐ Bipolar disorder (I or II)
☐ Schizophrenia
☐ Schizoaffective disorder
☐ History of psychosis
☐ Derealization or depersonalization disorder

Critical Red Flags

☐ Current or recent suicidal ideation
☐ History of mania or hypomania

Why this matters: Hyperventilation can destabilize brain circuits, causing:

- Panic spikes
- Manic activation
- Perceptual distortions
- Dissociation
- Psychosis

Required Modifications:

- **SKY is contraindicated**
- No Bhastrika
- No fast cycles
- No breath retentions
- No Bandhas
- Use gentle breathing only (slow nostril breathing, extended exhale patterns, ujjayi, or humming breath)
- Mental health evaluation is recommended before resuming any breath practice

5. Metabolic & Endocrine Diagnoses

☐ Hyperthyroidism
☐ Hypothyroidism
☐ Thyroid autoimmunity (Hashimoto's, Graves')
☐ Diabetes
☐ Adrenal dysfunction
☐ Chronic fatigue syndrome
☐ Electrolyte imbalance (potassium, sodium, calcium)

Why this matters: Hormonal instability can trigger:

- Palpitations
- Panic
- Arrhythmias
- Blood pressure fluctuations
  These may be worsened by rapid CO_2 shifts during breathwork.

Required Modifications:

- Avoid Bhastrika (or perform only gently)
- Avoid fast cycles; medium cycles only
- Avoid breath-holding
- Skip Bandhas
- Reduce overall intensity and session duration

6. Vascular & Blood Flow Conditions

☐ Carotid artery narrowing
☐ Aortic aneurysm
☐ Thoracic vascular disease
☐ Raynaud's syndrome
☐ History of blood clots

Why this matters: Rapid vascular tone changes during SKY may increase risk of:

- Stroke
- Arterial dissection
- Plaque movement
- Vasospasm

Required Modifications:

- Avoid Bhastrika entirely or perform only gently
- Avoid fast cycles; medium cycles only if medically cleared
- Avoid breath-holding during Three-Stage Pranayama; skip Bandhas
- Avoid any practice that produces dizziness, pressure, or vascular discomfort

7. Pregnancy & Postpartum

☐ Pregnant (any trimester)
☐ Postpartum < 6 months
☐ History of pregnancy-related hypertension or preeclampsia
☐ Gestational diabetes or high-risk pregnancy history

Why this matters:

- Breath retentions can reduce fetal oxygenation
- Hyperventilation destabilizes maternal blood pressure and uterine blood flow

Required Modifications:

- Avoid SKY entirely
- Use gentle, pregnancy-safe breathing only
- No retentions and No Bandhas
- No Bhastrika
- No fast cycles

Medical And Psychiatric Testing Recommendations

If symptoms or contraindications appear, instructors should recommend (and practitioners should pursue) appropriate evaluations.

Cardiovascular Testing

- ECG
- 2-D Echocardiogram
- 24–48 hr Holter
- Ambulatory Blood Pressure Monitoring
- TMT / Stress Test
- CT Angiography (if indicated)
- Coronary Calcium Score
- Carotid Doppler Ultrasound

Respiratory Testing

- Spirometry
- Chest X-ray
- HRCT (for fibrosis)
- FeNO (asthma inflammation test)
- Pulse oximetry during exertion

Metabolic / Endocrine Testing

- Thyroid panel (TSH, T3, T4)
- Thyroid antibodies
- Fasting glucose / HbA1c
- Electrolytes (Na+, K+, Ca++, Mg++)
- Vitamin D & B12
- Cortisol (AM)

Neurological and Psychiatric Evaluation

- Neurology assessment
- EEG (if seizures suspected)
- MRI (if indicated)
- Psychiatric interview and assessment
- Screening for panic disorder, bipolar disorder, OCD, schizophrenia, schizoaffective disorders, psychosis
- PTSD, Complex PTSD trauma assessment (if flashbacks or dissociation present)

Appendix C
Critical Information about Sudarshan Kriya Yoga

The following resources present critical information about **THE ART OF LIVING FOUNDATION** as well as the practices that are taught by its trained instructors, such as Sudarshan Kriya and DSN. Readers are suggested to refer to some of the critical perspectives to independently review and make decisions.

FROM THE BLOGS BY KLIM, SKYWALKER & OBI-WAN KENOBI

- Sudarshan Kriya: FREEING or FRYING the mind?
- 20-40-40
- Stupid or Relaxed
- Is Sudarshan Kriya Safe?
- Heart Problems Caused By Sudarshan Kriya
- Further Evidence of The Dangers of Sudarshan Kriya
- An objective participant reasons that Sudarshan Kriya is Hyperventilation
- A Better and Safer Alternative to Sudarshan Kriya
- How Can a Divine Revelation Be Defective?
- Why Teachers are Unqualified to Teach Sudarshan Kriya
- Questions Sudarshan Kriya Practitioners Should Ask Themselves
- Sudarshan Kriya and Bipolar Disorder
- Would You Put Your Life in the Hands of People Like This?

NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF SUDARSHAN KRIYA BY AGYATDARSHAN

- https://agyaatdarshan.wordpress.com/2010/12/23/negative-effects-of-sudarshan-kriya/

RISKS OF EXCESSIVE PRANAYAMA BY YOGI ANOOP

- https://www.yogianoop.com/blog/risks-of-excessive-pranayama

PARTH CHOKSI'S EXPERIENCE WITH SUDARSHAN KRIYA

- https://web.archive.org/web/20250620071723/https:/parthchoksi.com/life/experience/my-experience-of-doing-sudarshan-kriya-of-sri-sri-ravishankarart-of-living-organisation/

EX_ARTOFLIVING COMMUNITY ON REDDIT

- A Must Read: Is Sudarshan Kriya Safe for You? Did Your Art of Living Teacher Fully Inform You About Its Officially Listed Contraindications, Health Policy, Risks, and Both Possible as well as Documented Adverse Effects? : r/Ex_ArtOfLiving

Appendix D
Publicly Omitted & Unadvertised Research Studies On Sudarshan Kriya (2005–2018)

Several peer-reviewed medical studies have reported adverse effects in more than 200 individuals who practiced Sudarshan Kriya. Although these findings are part of the broader scientific literature and contribute to current health screening guidelines and contraindications, they do not appear among the 70+ studies highlighted in **THE ART OF LIVING FOUNDATION'S** promotional or outreach materials.

1. Richard P.Brown and Patricia L. Gerbarg (2005). "Sudarshan Kriya Yogic Breathing in the Treatment of Stress, Anxiety, and Depression: Part I-Neurophysiologic Model". Journal of alternative and complementary medicine (New York, N.Y.). 11. 189-201. 10.1089/acm.2005.11.189.

2. Richard P.Brown and Patricia L. Gerbarg (2005). "Sudarshan Kriya Yogic Breathing in the Treatment of Stress, Anxiety, and Depression: Part II-Clinical Applications and Guidelines". The Journal of Alternative and Complementary medicine Volume 11, Number 4, 2005, pp. 711–717.

3. Patricia L. Gerbarg and Richard P.Brown, (2005) "Yoga: A breath of relief for Hurricane Katrina refugees". Current Psychiatry Online. January 2005. Volume 4 (No. 10), pp 55-67.

4. Patricia L. Gerbarg, Gretchen Wallace, Richard P. Brown (2011) "Yoga therapy in practice: Mass disasters and mind-body solutions: evidence and field insights" International Journal Of Yoga Therapy (No. 21), p97 – 107).

5. Muskin. R.P. Gerbarg. P.L, Brown R.P, (2013), p121 to p140. Complementary and Integrative Therapies for Psychiatric Disorders, An Issue of Psychiatric Clinics, l e (The Clinics: Internal Medicine) 1st edition

6. Jerome Sarris, Patricia L. Gerbarg, Richard P. Brown, Philip R. Muskin (2015). Chapter 110, "Integrative and Complementary Medicine in Psychiatry" in (eds) Tasman, Allan. Kay, Jerald., Jeffrey A. Lieberman, Michael B. First, Mario Maj "Psychiatry". Fourth edition vol 2.

7. Patricia L. Gerbarg and Richard P. Brown (2016), "Neurobiology and Neurophysiology of Breath Practices in Psychiatric Care". Volume: 33, Issue 11. Psychiatric Times

8. Richard P. Brown, Patricia L. Gerbarg, Fred Muench (2018). "Yogic Breathing and Meditation: When the Thalamus Quiets the Cortex and Rouses the Limbic System" in Breathing Practices for Treatment of Psychiatric and Stress-Related Medical Conditions.